

A STUDY OF DECISION-MAKING
IN THE SELECTION INTERVIEW

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For any organization to survive, grow, and accomplish its goals and objectives, it must continually renew itself with the entry of qualified and capable employees. To meet this need, recruitment and selection procedures are instituted within the organizational framework. The degree of formality or complexity of these procedures may vary greatly from one organization to another. Nevertheless, the purpose of the procedures will remain the same--to provide a framework for locating potential employees, assessing their potential for success in specific job categories, and making predictions about their long-range value to the organization. Since it is costly for companies to get rid of poor employees, and since high turnover is costly in terms of quality of work, low morale, increased training costs, and increased unemployment benefits, the importance of the recruitment and selection process--which serves the function of sorting, classifying, and identifying characteristics in applicants that can be matched to specific job requirements and organizational goals--cannot be over-emphasized.¹

Many tools are available for obtaining information about the applicant which will be helpful in the organization's

hiring decision. Standard information gathering instruments include resumes, application forms, skill tests, psychological tests, reference checks, and interviews.

Although its importance in the selection process varies among organizations, the selection interview has been widely used over the past thirty years and continues to be widely used today. Felix Lopez comments:

Of all the methods used to appraise job qualifications, the interview is the oldest and most widely practiced: and...it can also be the most abused. The interview has severe limitations if it is used as the sole tool in selection, but when it is employed correctly by a trained interviewer in conjunction with other tools, it can constitute a highly relevant instrument of selection decision making.²

The interview, then, is of most value when used as one step in an organization's assembled selection system. Decisions made in it impact upon all spheres of organizational activity.

Erwin Stanton, author in the field of personnel selection comments:

It is commonly accepted that management's main job is to get appropriate results through effective use of people. The first step toward the proper use of an organization's human resources is to hire the right people.³

Therefore, the selection function is widely understood to be a pivotal process in the life and health of any organization.

One central purpose of any selection method must be to predict how an applicant may perform in the future. In

order to do this with some degree of accuracy, we need to know not only what he did in the past, but also why he did it. The oral interview offers certain advantages over other tools in the selection process in gathering this type of information. For example, the interviewer is afforded the opportunity to probe certain areas of special importance to him and then ask for clarification or amplification until he is satisfied with the response. Appearance and other nonverbal behavior, not obtainable from resumes and application forms, can be noted by the interviewer.

Downs, Smeyak, and Martin summarize some of the things that are accomplished in the interview that cannot be accomplished through written materials:

The Interviewee:

1. The interviewer can assess communication abilities, appearance, personality factors, thinking patterns, and level of motivation.
2. Most people will say more than they will write down. Furthermore, probing often yields more depth to answers, and the interview then facilitates a more thorough familiarization with the candidate.
3. The interviewee is likely to reveal the real extent of his or her interest in the job and the company.

The Company:

1. An interview personalizes the company by giving the interviewee a sense of the working atmosphere and the people in the organization.
2. It provides an opportunity to give more detailed explanations about local offices, personal aspects of jobs available, career and advancement opportunities not possible through a brochure.
3. The interview allows the tailoring of information to a specific interviewee.⁴

The exchange of information that occurs in the interview allows a representative of the hiring organization to compare applicant qualifications with job requirements in an effort to assure the best match. Newly acquired information is integrated with what is already known about the applicant, and, subsequently, a hiring decision is made. Information and impressions gained in the interview have a particularly significant impact on the final selection decision. Knowing more about the bases on which evaluations are made during the interview can contribute to an understanding of the overall decision-making process, which is the culmination of all selection steps. Two issues can be identified as pertinent to investigating the decision-making process as it occurs in the interview:

1. Both content and situational variables impact upon the interviewer's evaluation of the interviewee.

2. Decision-making is affected by the communication behaviors and strategies of both participants in the interaction.

The Problem

The specific problem in this study is threefold:

1. To survey current recruitment and selection procedures in a number of organizations and determine how the selection interview fits into that system.
2. To identify some of the most significant variables affecting the decision-making process within the context of a college recruitment interview.
3. To identify specific interviewer techniques and interviewee behaviors which facilitate or inhibit communication flow and achievement of the interview purpose.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

As noted previously, effective recruitment, selection, and placement procedures are indispensable to the smooth functioning and effective management of an organization. One of the hallmarks of an effective and efficient system is that it eliminates rather quickly those applicants whose qualifications are inappropriate for the job.⁵ Richard

Fear suggests that, "An employment system that does not allow for reasonably quick screening is not only inefficient (in terms of cost to the hiring organization) but also unfair to the individual (applicant).⁶

Within the personnel field, a high priority is now being assigned to the assessment of selection procedures and the implementation of efficient and cost-effective methods. The current economic environment makes this imperative. Stanton succinctly summarizes the problem:

Obviously, the cost of improper selection of personnel can be very high. When the unsuccessful employee must be terminated, the recruiting and interviewing must begin all over again, and the successor must first be trained before being put on the job. These costs, however, are only the more visible ones. The hidden costs are frequently even higher; low quality of work performed by the unsuccessful employee while still on the job; the internal disorganization and disruption that employee may have caused; the customer ill will and alienation that may have been generated; and perhaps the actual loss of a much valued account.⁷

Another factor having great impact on personnel selection is the proliferation of governmental regulations growing out of recent legislation. All steps in the selection system must be devoid of practices that could be construed as discriminatory or unfair to members of minorities and protected classes. A thorough knowledge of how legal restrictions effect selection procedures is mandatory for all members of the organization who participate in the selection process.

The selection interview in particular has been the focus

of considerable scrutiny. Moffatt describes the current environment in which professional interviewers operate in the following:

Many interviewers feel they are unable to obtain the information they need during an interview because of constraints imposed upon the interviewing process by the EEOC and by Title VII legislation. It is not necessarily true that these rules and regulations prevent interviewers from finding out what they need to know. However, it is undeniable that EEOC and Title VII regulations have radically changed the complexion of interviewing in recent years.⁸

One of the issues explored in this study will be current attitudes toward governmental regulations held by professionals in recruitment and selection.

In view of the above-mentioned issues--the costliness of ineffective selection procedures and the impact of government regulations upon selection methods--the need for more research in the area of decision-making appears obvious. A review of the literature on selection interviewing brings awareness of the need for more data not only in the areas of validity, reliability, and predictive value of the interview, but also in the area of the decision-making process itself. Also of value would be specific knowledge of how situational variables and the skills and behaviors of the participants affect interview outcomes.

In 1963 Dunnette and Bass called for more useful research in the field of interviewing and asserted the following, "The continued uncritical use of the personal interview offers a clear illustration of what is one of personnel management's

prime problems--that is, the great resistance to carrying out fundamental research on its practices and techniques.⁹

A more thorough understanding of how specific interviewer techniques and behaviors contribute to effectiveness has been called for by many theorists. Kahn and Cannell discuss this problem in The Dynamics of Interviewing when they state:

...the miscellaneous rules of interviewing are not always consistent; they are not unified around any basic way of regarding the interview. Even more important, they do not help us understand the interaction between interviewer and respondent. They do not tell us why a specific practice makes for a successful interview, or in what context a practice is desirable or undesirable.¹⁰

This study will attempt to deal with some of the above issues. The perspective from which the study will be conducted is that as organizations become more complex and more cost-conscious, the necessity for efficient and effective selection procedures increases. Thus, the impact upon productivity, profitability, and stability within the organization of decisions made during the selection process is far-reaching.

Limitations of the Study

There are four limitations to this study. First, the study deals primarily with the initial screening interview. Since the college recruitment interview often functions as an initial screening device, it was chosen for the purpose of data collection. Second, all participants voluntarily

agreed to take part in the study and no attempt was made to obtain a random or representative sample. Third, all participants were from the same general geographic area. And fourth, all data was collected through questionnaires and interviews.

Questionnaire Sample

The questionnaire sample included college recruiters who came to the University of Kansas during the 1979-80 school year, and members of business and industry responsible for implementing recruitment and selection procedures within their organizations.

Interview Sample

Interview participants were personnel specialists or members of organizations specifically responsible for college recruiting in their functional areas of the organization. Participants were selected both from a list of contacts in organizations compiled by the Director of Placement of the University of Kansas School of Business and contacts in organizations known to the researcher.

Conclusion and Preview of Subsequent Chapters

This chapter has been an attempt to give an overview of the selection system and the place of the selection interview in that system. The importance of decisions made in the interview to all areas of the organization has been

stressed. Chapter II presents a discussion of pertinent literature related to recruitment and selection and the interview. Studies specifically related to decision-making will be discussed. Chapter III presents the methodology and specific procedures used for data collection. Results of the questionnaire are presented in Chapter IV and Chapters V and VI present results and analyses of the interviews. Conclusions and recommendations are contained in Chapter VII.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Lopez, F. Personnel Interviewing. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1975, p. 3.
- ² Ibid., p. 84.
- ³ Stanton, E. S. Successful Personnel Recruiting and Selection. New York: Amacom, 1977, p. v.
- ⁴ Downs, C. W., P. Smeyak, & E. Martin. Professional Interviewing. New York: Harper & Row, 1980, pp. 108-109.
- ⁵ Fear, R. The Evaluation Interview. (Revised 2nd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978, p. 14.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 14.
- ⁷ Stanton, p. 3.
- ⁸ Moffatt, T. L. Selection Interviewing for Managers. New York: Harper & Row, 1979, p. 138.
- ⁹ Dunnett, M. D. & Bass, B. M. Behavioral Scientists and Personnel Management. Industrial Relations, 1965, II, 115-130.
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CHAPTER II

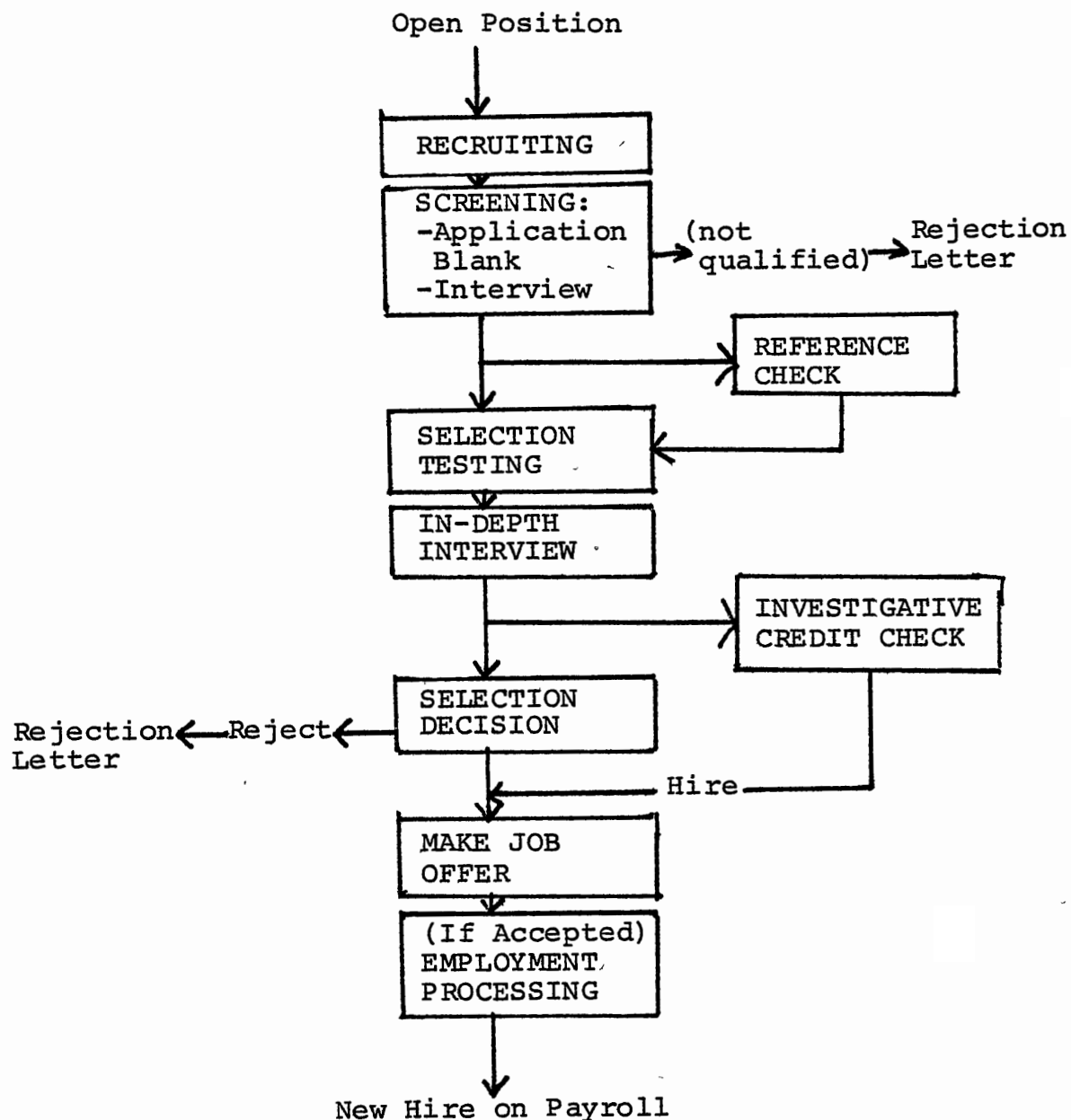
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Selection System

A comprehensive and effective personnel selection system is recognized to be of great value to any organization that must hire more than a few employees each year. Since the quality of the organization's personnel is considered to be one of the single most important factors affecting organizational effectiveness, corporations often choose to invest considerable financial resources to insure an adequate flow of human resources into their organization. The selection system usually includes a series of steps or "screens" through which the candidate must pass to get to the final step--a possible job offer. (See Figure 1: Model of a Selection System.)

A fundamental goal of any selection system is to insure that the best qualified job applicants are recruited and placed in the most appropriate positions within the organization. Making the best fit between organization and applicant can be costly. The median cost for hiring a new employee (entry level) is currently estimated to be in the vicinity of \$1,750.¹ These costs cover newspaper advertising, employment agency fees, interviewing time, and general administrative expenses. Personnel specialists are now also

Figure 1:
Model of a Selection System*



*Taken from: Robertson, Jason. How to win in a job interview (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), p. 16.

becoming aware of the costliness of hiring the unqualified or "marginal employee"--those who are neither grossly incompetent nor truly satisfactory. When there is excessive pressure to fill vacancies, the rationalization--that these applicants can be brought up to par with training and experience on the job--is sometimes accepted. Erwin Stanton has studied the selection process extensively. In his book, Successful Personnel Recruiting and Selection, he refutes this rationalization by stating:

...if the wrong employee has been selected initially, no training program or motivational system--no matter how well conceived and designed--is likely to compensate adequately or offset the original error made in hiring such a person.²

The selection system's early steps include analysis of application form information, reference checks, and testing (when appropriate for the position). These steps have two main functions: 1) to eliminate those applicants whose qualifications can be identified as inappropriate for the job, and 2) to provide information that will be helpful in the in-depth interview and evaluation.³ Data from all steps is then synthesized in the final steps of the process. New data will be acquired in the final interview and will be integrated with other information in an attempt to understand "the total candidate."

Stanton offers a useful model for understanding the functions of a comprehensive selection system designed to attract well-qualified applicants, and screen out unsatisfactory

ones in an efficient manner. The steps include: 1) determination of staffing expectations, 2) recruitment of a large pool of applicants, 3) initial screening, 4) reference checking, 5) a structured interview, and 6) evaluation and making the hiring decision.⁴

In the first step, determining staffing needs, there is heavy reliance upon data gathered through the technique of job analysis. In the job analysis, critical information about the specific qualifications needed to perform the job is amassed from interviews with incumbents, observation, and the administration of job-related questionnaires. "Job descriptions" and "job specification sheets" are often the products of the job analysis and can form the basis for determining which basic abilities, personal characteristics, and character traits are necessary for successful performance of the job.

Recruitment techniques that attract a large applicant pool from which selection can be made is considered to be essential to the success of any selection system. Using creative and innovative newspaper ads can often accomplish this goal. Stanton contends that whether the labor market is "hard" or "soft," good people are always hard to find. Thus, for a selective system to be truly "selective," a large sample must be attracted.

The initial screening step can include processing application form information and holding mini-interviews with

candidates. "Knock-out" questions are used to ascertain whether or not the applicant must be disqualified because he/she cannot meet certain basic requirements--the necessity of weekend work or extensive travel might cause certain applicants to disqualify themselves, for example. The initial interview allows for visual screening in which appearance and other visual cues may indicate that an applicant would not warrant further investigation.

Step four, checking references, is an indispensable step in the eyes of most personnel specialists. They argue that many interviewees do engage in embellishing their qualifications and presentation of false information on occasion.⁵ Therefore, the effectiveness of the entire selection system is eroded when qualifications and abilities are not verified through reference checking. As with selection interviewing, evaluating information received from former employers requires ability to perceive not only what is said, but also how it is said, and what is not said.⁶

The structured, in-depth interview is the most costly and time-consuming step in the system. Most theorists and personnel specialists would probably agree with Richard Fear's assertion that the final interview represents the core of any good selection program. Rogers and Fortson describe the role of the final interview:

The interview should be used to verify, clarify, and add data for the selection decision. A skilled interviewer has several advantages over a paper and pencil test. If the applicant has a particular

weakness or strength, the interviewer can probe that area in depth to obtain additional information for an accurate assessment. This adaptability and flexibility can also be applied to clear up apparent discrepancies in employment dates, duties, salaries, etc.⁷

The goal of the final interview, then, is to develop a solid informational base on which the hiring decision can be made and to get an in-depth understanding of the "total candidate."

The final step in the selection process is evaluating the accumulated data in preparation for making a recommendation about hiring the candidate. Often, a rating form which allows for both numerical and descriptive data can facilitate this process. For the purpose of meeting governmental regulations it is also advisable. Stanton suggests organizing the rating form around three basic areas: 1) basic abilities (intelligence, job knowledge, education, experience), 2) personal characteristics (poise, attitudes, motivations), and 3) character traits (self-reliance, stability, leadership potential).⁸ Generally, rating forms serve to help the interviewer organize his thinking and summarize his impressions.

Government Regulations and the Selection System

Regulations growing out of recent legislation have greatly increased the complexity of administering a recruitment and selection system. Today, all members of the organization involved in the selection process, even peripherally, must

be informed about the implications of this legislation. Illegal information must not be elicited or used in determining suitability for employment. A primary concern for the personnel specialist has become avoidance of any action in the selection process that might lead to legal action against the company. Consequently, most organizations assiduously pursue a course of treating all applicants as courteously and fairly as possible, in order to avoid making enemies among applicants through the "appearance" of discriminatory procedures.

Many practices and procedures in the selection process have come under close scrutiny as a result of recent legislation. Newspaper advertisements, testing methods and content, and the accumulation of documents and records that disclose information about the applicant must be totally nondiscriminatory. Two general criteria for avoidance of discriminatory practices in the general sense are: 1) be sure all inquiries in the application form and the interview pass the acid test of being job related, and 2) be sure that all inquiries fulfill a true business need.⁹

The primary thrust of all regulations is to prevent organizations from screening out applicants for prejudicial reasons. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in hiring due to sex, religion, color or race. The objective is to improve minority employment by requiring employers to use "color-blind" employment criteria.¹⁰

For example, if job criteria prove to affect the potential for employment of individuals in a protected class negatively, the organization must be able to directly relate the criteria to productivity in the job.

The Sex Discrimination Act, the Age Discrimination Act, and the Rehabilitation Act prevent employers from using information concerning these areas to discriminate against candidates unless the information pertains directly to qualifying the person for very specific job requirements. Bona fide occupational qualifications can, however, allow an employer to legitimately disqualify an applicant because of age, sex, or handicap.¹¹

Because of the new emphasis upon adapting to these regulations, an atmosphere of some confusion exists among personnel specialists. Moffatt concludes that actually many misconceptions exist in the minds of personnel professionals about the extent to which governmental regulations hamper the administration of the selection system. He comments:

Although the law does put constraints on the kinds of questions that tend to discriminate against minorities, it still permits the employer to make the decision to hire the most qualified candidate, providing the judgment is made objectively and without prejudice, and providing the organization does not have a pattern of discriminatory hiring decisions that screen out an entire class of people.¹²

Government Regulations and the Interview

Two important considerations now face the selection interviewer as he approaches the interviewee--his desire to

conduct an effective interview and his obligation to conduct a legal interview. Fear of incurring a lawsuit against the company has caused many professional interviewers to feel that there are few questions that can be safely asked of the interviewee. Interviewers may sometimes panic when faced with a minority candidate because they believe there are not questions they can pose that will be above suspicion.¹³ As a general rule, Stanton advises interviewers to avoid asking questions in the following areas, although he points out the fact that the final legal status of several of these questions is still to be determined by the courts:

- applicant's race, national origin, or religion
- applicant's arrest record or credit rating
- charge accounts, home or car ownership, or life insurance
- in most instances, availability for Saturday or Sunday work (since such a question can reveal religious preference).¹⁴

It is important to note that there are many sources available which provide information to interviewers helpful in interpretation of regulations. For example, professional journals, government publications, representatives of the EEOC, and in-house legal departments can provide useful information in the compliance area. A review of recent publications indicates the belief does exist among professionals that the skilled interviewer can still preserve the integrity of the interview process, while complying with the law. Moffatt summarizes this perspective in the following:

(The) primary obligation placed on interviewers is to be sure they understand the framework and the law and conduct their interviews accordingly, and it requires that the organization provide interviewers with the training that will enable them to meet this obligation.¹⁵

(Note: A summary of some of the training programs that have been developed to meet the need identified here by Moffatt is contained in a later section of this paper.)

The Selection Interview

Definition

Felix Lopez defines the selection interview as both a measurement device for directly observing certain aspects of the interviewee's behavior, and a self-report measure which allows the applicant to give certain information about himself.¹⁶ Kahn and Cannell stress the interactional nature of the process and suggest that both participants are instrumental in defining the end-product of that interaction--"the interview." They note that the selection interview, as distinct from other forms of conversation, is always characterized by a specific content focus and a purpose.

In his book, Selection Interviewing for Managers, Thomas Moffatt offers a comprehensive definition which provides an excellent framework within which to examine the functions and characteristics of the selection interview:

The (selection) interview...might be defined as a specialized pattern of professional communication, within a limited time frame, initiated for a

specific purpose. As such, it should focus on specific content areas, with the elimination of extraneous material. It requires establishing a relationship in which the pattern of interaction and communication will consist almost exclusively of material that is relevant for the special purpose under consideration.¹⁷

The professional communication in the interview is goal-oriented. The primary content focus rests on the exchange of information about the interviewee that will help in predicting his potential for meeting the requirements of the job in question.

Goals and Objectives

Both the interviewer and the interviewee enter the situation with certain goals and objectives which they wish to accomplish as a result of their interaction. Securing information that will increase the probability of making a qualitatively sound hiring decision is paramount from the interviewer's point of view. Goals and objectives most frequently ascribed to the selection interview, from the organization's point of view, have been summarized by Downs, Smeyak and Martin:

- 1) To initiate personal contact with the applicant.
- 2) To give orientation to the specific job and the company.
- 3) To maintain an adequate workforce.
- 4) To suit the worker to the job.
- 5) To gather information about the candidate that will enable the interviewer to predict successful performance.

- 6) To find out what kind of person the candidate is.¹⁸

Initiating personal contact begins the socialization process between the applicant and the organization and allows each to make some assumptions about the potential for compatibility. Objective six highlights a common theme in personnel selection today--that of focusing on the applicant as a "total person," whose pervasive personality style and orientation can best be understood through an integration of all the accumulated data.

The interviewee also enters the event with certain goals and objectives. Goodale has identified what he considers to be the most common interviewee goals:

- 1) The desire to "sell oneself" and create a favorable impression.
- 2) The need to collect information about the organization and the job that will be instrumental in deciding whether or not to accept a job offer.
- 3) The need to test the personal chemistry between himself and the representatives of the hiring organization.¹⁹

Types of Selection Interviews

Selection interviews can be generally classified into two categories: screening or preliminary interviews, and final or in-depth interviews. Screening interviews have two basic purposes: 1) to determine whether the applicant possesses the critical specifications of the position in question; and 2) to tactfully expedite the departure of unqualified applicants and those who are socially undesirable,

overtly hostile, or emotionally disturbed.²⁰ The purpose is not to acquire depth information about the applicant's character or background, but simply to find out whether or not he has characteristics and skills worthy of further consideration. The format usually includes asking a few key questions while also noting factors which might be grounds for screening out the applicant, like slovenly or totally inappropriate attire. Stanton describes the typical format as follows:

- 1) Visual screening of the candidate's appearance and mannerisms.
- 2) Asking "knock-out" questions based on specific requirements of the job.
- 3) Reviewing and verifying applicant form data with the applicant.
- 4) Briefly describing the job to the applicant.²¹

The college recruitment interview is one type of preliminary interview. Moffatt comments about the unique features of campus interviewing:

Of all interviewing situations, perhaps the one requiring the greatest patience and versatility on the part of the interviewer is the interview with the brand-new college graduate or, as is more often the case, the student who will be graduated at the end of the term.²²

These interviews present special challenges to the interviewer for some of the following reasons: 1) the wide variance in levels of maturity of interviewees, 2) the limited range of topics available because of the usual lack of previous job experiences, and 3) the necessity of seeing a large number

of interviewees during the course of the day with only twenty to thirty minutes in which to make an evaluation.²³ A typical college recruitment interview is often arranged in a very specific manner (see Figure 2).

Richard Fear has identified four factors which most frequently lead to rejection of candidates in all types of screening and preliminary interviews: 1) inadequate experience or training, 2) age (to be a valid screening factor, age must be directly related to productivity on the job), 3) marked physical disabilities (same as above), and 4) completely inappropriate personality pattern for the specific job.²⁴

Factors which distinguish screening interviews from in-depth interviews are the time available and the depth or level of communication that takes place. The necessity for brevity in both the college recruitment interview and the in-house preliminary interview preclude the probing of a variety of topics and exploring at length of the interviewee's attitudes and values.

In-Depth Interviews

Three basic approaches to conducting the final or in-depth interview are available to the interviewer: 1) the "directive" approach, 2) the "indirective" approach, and 3) the "patterned" or "flexible structured" approach. The directive approach puts the interviewer in the position of asking a continuous series of questions of the interviewee,

Figure 2
Typical College Interview*

2-3 minutes.....introduction and "breaking the ice"
2-3 minutes.....verifying data on resume
 $\frac{1}{2}$ minute.....laying out structure of topics to be
discussed
15 minutes.....body of the interview
5-7 minutes.....selling the company and/or job
2 minutes.....summarizing and closing

*Taken from: Moffatt, T. L. Selection Interviewing for Managers. New York: Harper & Row, 1979, p. 159).

with the result that a lot of factual data is amassed in a relatively short amount of time. Richard Fear reflects the feeling of many interviewers when he suggests that this rapid question and answer format is somewhat intimidating to the interviewee and puts him "on guard." Fear concludes:

...this type of interview normally results in very little spontaneous information--information that bubbles to the surface without any conscious restrictions on the part of the applicant. Such spontaneous responses are of course likely to be much more genuine and usually provide many clues to the individual's assets and shortcomings.²⁵

The indirect approach, on the other hand, does permit and encourage spontaneity since the interviewer introduces a few broad, open-ended questions and then allows the interviewee to respond at length and control topic choice and emphasis. The real danger in this approach to selection interviewing is, obviously, that enough topics may not be covered to permit a meaningful evaluation of the applicant. Also, subjectivity and bias are more likely to enter into the evaluations when the interview is not structured to the point of being sure that all applicants are asked questions in the same topic areas.

By far the most popular approach to interviewing today is the patterned interview. This approach is in some ways a synthesis of the direct and indirect approaches. Topic control is maintained by the interviewer but the interviewee is encouraged to expound freely about the topics introduced.²⁶ The interviewer determines the amount of time spent on each topic area. One type of patterned interview, "the evaluation

interview," was developed by Richard Fear. With this approach, the interviewer follows a logical sequence of topics and chooses mainly open-ended questions--thought to be especially useful in encouraging the interviewee to disclose his priorities and frame of reference. Fear comments:

By adroit wording of questions and comments, and by reflecting the applicant's feelings, "spontaneous information" can be obtained without having to ask direct or pointed questions and without the applicant feeling that he is being grilled or cross-examined.²⁷

Establishing good rapport between the interviewer and interviewee is crucial to the effectiveness of this approach, since gaining spontaneous information of both a positive and negative nature is more likely in a warm and supportive climate.

Other proponents of the patterned approach point to the effectiveness of using both open and closed questions. One personnel specialist with a major airline asserts that the effectiveness of the patterned interview is greatly enhanced when the interviewer uses "paired questions"--an open question followed by a closed question, throughout the interview.

Most in-depth interviews last from about forty-five minutes to one and a half hours. Topic areas usually focus on the following: 1) educational history, 2) previous job history, 3) current job information, 4) interests, 5) future career goals and plans, 6) description of the position, and 7) information about the company. The amount of time and

importance assigned to each of these topic areas will vary among interviewers.

The Role of the Interviewer

Functions

Various functions of the interviewer have been identified by theorists in the field. Kahn and Cannell identify two which they see as central to the role--motivation and measurement. They emphasize that the interviewer must focus on motivating the interviewee to communicate information freely, and that this can best be done by establishing a favorable psychological climate. In other words, the interviewee must perceive the interviewer as being supportive and sympathetic. Two sources of motivation can be used: 1) direct psychological rewards (warmth and responsiveness of interviewer, or simply providing the opportunity to talk), and 2) the interviewee's perception of the interview as a means to achieving his goals (getting a job or earning a certain salary).²⁸

Kahn and Cannell stress also the very important function of question formation. Interviewers must translate the purpose of the interview--gaining relevant and useful data about the interviewee--into very specific objectives through the skillful designing of the questions.

In addition to the measurement function, Downs, Smeyak, and Martin describe the important interviewer functions of

planning strategies and managing the interview. "Strategy," in the context of the interview, can be defined as those decisions and plans made by the interviewer, prior to the interview, to insure the accomplishment of the objectives.²⁹ Planning involves the following: 1) identifying the purpose of the interview, 2) preparing an agenda, 3) designing and grouping questions, 4) structuring the interview, 5) choosing the physical setting, and 6) anticipating problems.³⁰

Managing the interview requires the interviewer to employ a number of "tactics" or ways of sequencing and responding to events as they occur in the interview. Downs et. al. identify five tactical areas for which the interviewer must take responsibility: 1) establishing a productive climate, 2) listening analytically, 3) probing thoughtfully, 4) continually motivating the interviewee, and 5) maintaining control of the interview.³¹

Gorden points to the importance of "techniques," or behaviors used to keep the respondent talking, as another tool available to the interviewer. He distinguishes tactics from techniques in the following way: "...we define "techniques" as specific forms of verbal and nonverbal behavior used during the interview and "tactics" as the way in which specific techniques are varied to meet problems as they arise..."³² Techniques can include such behaviors as asking for clarification, making "mirror" statements, asking reflective probes, and nodding the head to keep the inter-

viewee talking. Theorists concur that one of the most effective techniques available to the interviewer is the use of silence. Interviewer silence implies the need for more information, for an expansion of the response. Gorden comments, "Often a silent probe in an exploratory interview obtains answers to significant questions which the interviewer would never have thought of asking."³³ Research by Gorden, Matarazzo, and Wiens (1966) indicated a positive correlation between amount of silence used by the interviewer and the interviewee's general level of spontaneity.³⁴

Interviewer Errors and Problems

Many of the problems encountered by interviewers stem from lack of experience and lack of training. Moffatt identifies three key errors made by inexperienced interviewers: The first is failure to understand the importance of establishing clear-cut objectives and goals.³⁵ When this happens, the interviewer ends up doing too much of the talking, asking aimless questions, and clearly lacking in direction and organization. Another common pitfall is lack of preparation prior to the initial meeting with the applicant.³⁶ When the interviewer has not planned questions and topic areas ahead of time, he will probably have to ask general questions--not tailored to the individual and the specific job. Also, lack of preparation is usually obvious to the interviewee who may feel that it is a lack of interest in him.

The third problem identified by Moffatt can be present whether the interviewer is simply inexperienced or has been a professional interviewer for many years--poor communication skills. Needless to say, this problem is considered to be a basic cause of interview problems by all theorists and professionals in the field. Moffatt summarizes the fundamental consequences of this problem:

...communication is the very heart of the interview...without effective communication, the interviewer-applicant relationship will lack rapport and may even disintegrate into an adversary situation; most of the information exchanged will be of a banal, surface nature; and the interview will fall far short of its objectives.³⁷

Errors are just as likely to be committed by experienced interviewers as those who are not experienced, since faulty interviewing practices become firmly entrenched in the interviewer's style through repetition.³⁸ Stanton lists some of the most common interviewer errors: 1) failure to establish rapport, 2) failure to have a strategy, 3) superficiality, 4) incorrect interpretation, 5) unconscious biases and preferences, 6) excessive talking, 7) reliance on intuition, 8) overemphasis on initial impression, and 9) injection of stress factors.³⁹

Assumptions About Effectiveness

Notions about what factors characterize the effective interviewer abound in the literature. Time and space constraints permit only a brief sampling of some of the

prevailing assumptions. Lopez describes the effective interviewer as one who: 1) listens well, 2) enacts the role of a "participant-observer," 3) initiates appropriate behavior designed to meet interview objectives, 4) responds to behavioral cues from interviewee, 5) demonstrates leadership, 6) accepts accountability for outcomes, 7) empathizes and observes astutely, and 8) takes accurate notes.⁴⁰

Richard Fear defines effectiveness in terms of "salesmanship." He asserts that it is exceedingly important for the interviewer to have the type of personality that will enable him to "sell" the applicant on "opening up and telling his story."⁴¹ Certain personality factors lead to effectiveness in motivating the interviewee to do just that--such as warmth, sensitivity in social situations, and adaptability.

Nehrbass associates effectiveness with the ability to reduce psychological barriers between the interviewer and interviewee. These barriers often can produce "phoney behavior" and thus produce invalid information from the interviewee. His criteria for effectiveness include:

- 1) Ability to create a psychologically safe and supportive environment.
- 2) Determination to focus upon getting the best person for the job, rather than finding a "personality type" or ideal candidate.
- 3) Asking questions that elicit factual responses rather than encouraging interviewee "image building."
- 4) Pairing a positive question with a negative question.

- 5) Showing genuine interest in the interviewee and recognizing the inevitability of nervousness.⁴²

Finally, it is important to remember that a variety of factors within the interviewer, the interviewee, and the situational context can contribute to overall effectiveness of the interview. The ultimate criteria for judging effectiveness, however, is not a specific variable such as the absence of tactical errors, but whether or not the interview goals are met. As discussed previously, getting enough relevant and useful data about the interviewee to make a sound hiring decision is the primary goal of all selection interviews.

The Role of the Interviewee

Because of the inherent inequality of power in the interview, the interviewee role is largely dictated by the actions of the interviewer. Despite the inequality of power, however, the interviewee has a key role to play in the overall interview process. Downs et al. emphasize the dynamic, interactional nature of the communication that occurs in the interview situation in the following:

Communication in the interview is a mutual process. Both people in an interview contribute to the interaction, and the effectiveness of their efforts depends on their mutual cooperation. Neither person has exclusive control over the communication behavior of the other, and either can choose to block communication.⁴³

Recently, a great deal of attention has been focused on both the role and rights of the interviewee in the selection interview. Publications in two areas have been particularly numerous: 1) those informing the interviewee of his legal rights as specified in regulations growing out of recent legislation, and 2) those advising the interviewee about how to present himself in the most favorable manner when participating in a selection interview. Discussion in previous sections has outlined some of the questions that interviewees do not have to respond to. The aforementioned publications seek to alert potential applicants to the possibility that they may encounter illegal practices in the selection process. A discussion of what the interviewee's options are in such a situation is also presented.

Books and journal articles telling applicants "how to win in the interview" are also plentiful. In fact, a kind of "counter strategy" has developed in which readers are advised about everything from what to wear to the interview to exactly what questions to expect from the interviewer. An example of the way one author presents his counter strategy is found in the following from Kelly in an article entitled, "How to play the interviewing game":

The best bet is to wear a suit, white shirt, dark tie, shined shoes, immaculate fingernails, cleaned combed hair. Don't lounge, or sprawl. Be punctual and punctilious. Wear glasses (they imply "intelligence"). Don't be too confident or brash...practice smiling and beaming out goodwill!⁴⁴

Among the most common admonitions to perspective interviewees are the following: 1) be neat, well-groomed and "professional" looking; 2) be an "active" listener and maintain good eye-contact with the interviewer; 3) demonstrate knowledge about the hiring organization; 4) know the interview format so that you can anticipate what's coming next; 5) sell yourself and be prepared to turn any weaknesses into strengths; and 6) follow the interviewer's lead and let him maintain control of the interview.

Many surveys have been conducted among professional interviewers to identify what it is they're looking for in the applicants they interview--in other words, which qualities make the difference. Ross Whitehead (1978) reported that Hughes Aircraft asked forty interview specialists to list the characteristics they considered most important in applicants. The following were most often mentioned: 1) specific ability, 2) ambition, 3) maturely directed energy, 4) the ability to communicate well, 5) general intelligence and knowledge, and 6) integrity.⁴⁵

In a survey of college recruiters conducted by Downs (1967), certain interviewer characteristics were found to be more favorably rated than others. A rank ordering appears in Figure 3. As part of this research study, professional interviewers were asked to rank order this list of 26 characteristics reported by Downs. Results will be compared in Chapters IV and V.

Figure 3

Rank Order of Decision Factors*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Enthusiasm | 14. Interest in people |
| 2. Oral communication ability | 15. Extracurricular activities |
| 3. Leadership potential | 16. Loyalty |
| 4. Confidence in self | 17. Preparation for interview |
| 5. Aggressiveness and initiative | 18. Willingness to travel |
| 6. Emotional stability | 19. Formulated long-range goals and objectives |
| 7. Writing skills | 20. Realistic salary expectations |
| 8. Scholastic record | 21. Humility |
| 9. Pleasant personality | 22. Work experience of a particular type |
| 10. Personal appearance | 23. Willingness to accept routine assignments |
| 11. Moral standards | 24. Compatibility with interviewer |
| 12. Poise in the interview | 25. Liberal arts courses |
| 13. Efficient | 26. Specialized courses |

*Downs, C. W., Smeyak, P., & Martin, E. Professional interviewing. New York: Harper & Row, 1980, p. 118.

Considerable attention to identifying those factors which lead to rejection of the interviewee has also been given by researchers and authors in the field of interviewing. McClendon (1978) reported the following as what he found to be the most frequent reasons given by personnel specialists for not hiring an applicant: 1) job hopping (although in young candidates this was not considered to be as serious), 2) reluctance to relocate, 3) personality differences with the interviewer, 4) unrealistic salary requirements, 5) inadequate background, 6) poor track record (lack of progression in level of responsibility and salary), 7) unprepared, 8) poor salary negotiating skills, 9) low-growth potential, and 10) poor reference checks.⁴⁶

Other frequently mentioned characteristics that draw negative ratings from interviewers include: 1) being overly self-critical, 2) being unable to express ideas clearly, 3) lacking in enthusiasm, 4) being extremely passive or extremely aggressive, 5) dominating the conversation, 6) assuming intimacy, and 7) being tactless or uncourteous.⁴⁷

Studies Relevant to Decision-Making

An early review of research studies conducted by Wagner (1949) uncovered a noticeable lack of empirical investigation into selection interviewing. In his report, Wagner noted that of the 106 titles he reviewed, only 25 contained reference to empirical research methods. He

concluded that:

- 1) A great deal of confusion exists as to what can and cannot be accomplished in the interview, and
- 2) further research on the interview is needed.⁴⁸

In 1964, Eugene Mayfield reviewed over 300 articles and concluded that there essentially had not been much change from the time of Wagner's review. He noted a disconcerting lack of useful knowledge about the selection interview, and lamented the profusion of "opinion articles" that had flooded the field. Mayfield suggested that two factors explained the limited knowledge about the selection interview: 1) a lack of comparability between studies, and 2) dependence on studies carried out in other fields.⁴⁹ Lack of comparability resulted from the fact that different traits were measured in studies, different criteria for success in the job had been used, positions for which predictions were being made varied greatly, and interviews varied in length. Mayfield identified factor #2 as a problem because many assumptions applied to the selection interview had actually originated in research carried out in widely diverse fields rather than emerging from the selection context.

Mayfield reviewed the studies in the period following the Wagner Review through 1963 and presented the following conclusions about the selection interview:

- 1) The interview can be divided into various types of units, and this can be done reliably.
- 2) The intra-rater reliability of the interview appears to be satisfactory.

- 3) An interviewer is consistent in the approach to different interviewees; the techniques used remain fairly constant.
- 4) A general suitability rating based on an unstructured interview with no previous information provided has extremely low inter-rater reliability, especially in employment situations.
- 5) In an unstructured interview, material is not consistently covered.
- 6) When interviewers obtain the same information, they are likely to interpret or weigh it differently.
- 7) Structured interviews, in general, provide a higher inter-rater reliability than do unstructured interviews.
- 8) Although the reliabilities of interviews may be high in given situations, the validities obtained are usually of a low magnitude. (Just what is it that is being measured?)
- 9) With respect to traits or characteristics which can be estimated reliably and validly from interviews, it seems that only the intelligence or mental ability of the interviewee can be judged satisfactorily.
- 10) The form of the question does affect the answer obtained.
- 11) The attitudes of interviewers do affect their interpretations of what the interviewee says.
- 12) In the usual unstructured employment interview, the interviewer talks more than does the interviewee.
- 13) Interviewers appear to be influenced more by unfavorable than favorable information.
- 14) Interviewers tend to make their decision early in an unstructured interview.⁵⁰

The most significant contribution to increased knowledge of the decision-making process in selection interviewing was the Webster Report of 1964. In this report, Webster summarized

his nine years of work at McGill University and also the work of his graduate students (B. Springbett, D. Sydiaha, C. Anderson, A. Crowell, and P. Rowe). The seven principal findings of their research were instrumental in sparking much additional research in the decision-making area.

Findings reported were as follows:

- 1) Interviewers develop a stereotype of a good candidate and seek to match interviewees with the stereotype;
- 2) Biases are established by interviewers early in the interview and tend to be followed by favorable or unfavorable decisions;
- 3) Unfavorable data is most influential on interviewers;
- 4) Interviewers seek data to support or deny hypotheses and, when satisfied, turn their attention elsewhere;
- 5) Empathy relationships are specific to individual interviewers;
- 6) A judge's decision (and, by implication, an interviewer's) is different when fed information piece by piece rather than simultaneously; and
- 7) Experienced interviewers rank applicants in the same order although they differ in the number they will accept.⁵¹

Webster emphasized that despite the fact that some of these findings suggest that interviewer decisions may be somewhat "automatic," the interviewer does in fact make a unique contribution to the selection process. He cautioned against conceptualizing decision-making as "mechanical."

Studies carried out in the period from 1964-1969 were reviewed by Orman Wright. Among the most significant

research conducted during this period was by Carlson and Mayfield, who investigated the decision-making process in a long-term project for the Life Insurance Agency Management Association. Their studies (1966, 1967) investigated the concept of interviewer stereotypes (identified in the Webster studies). They concluded that interviewers have two types of stereotypes--a "common" stereotype shared by all and related to one set of job requirements, and, secondly, a "specific" stereotype unique to each interviewer and involving a separate set of requirements.⁵²

In subsequent studies, Carlson and Mayfield confirmed another of the McGill findings--that interviewers respond more to unfavorable than favorable data. In their experiments, managers reacted more strongly to negative information, and inter-rater reliability was found to be significantly greater for unfavorable than favorable applicants.⁵³

The effects of situational variables upon decision-making has been the focus of a number of studies. Rowe (1967) used the method of presenting applicants to interviewers first in order of ascending favorability, then descending favorability, and finally randomly. She concluded that the order of presentation does influence decision-making and that previous judgments do affect later ones.⁵⁴

Carlson conducted a number of studies designed to test the effects of situational variables, including the effects of imposed quotas on interviewer acceptance ratio. Among

his most significant findings were that interviewers would offer more employment contracts when behind in quota, and that extreme quota situations produced more uniformity in employment decisions among interviewers.⁵⁵

Another situational variable affecting decision-making is the interviewee's ability to manipulate the outcome by distorting information. Maier (1966) used a role-playing format in which honesty and dishonesty of information given to interviewers were the manipulated variables. Many of Maier's findings supported those of the McGill group. Also, he concluded that interviewer decisions are based on intuition or "common sense" and that cues are unspecified or unknown to the interviewer.⁵⁶

In a similar study, Maier and Janzen (1967) found that 1) judges do not know the reasons for judgments about certain variables, 2) the accuracy of judgments varies with individual judges, and 3) judgments seem to be based on impressions rather than logic.⁵⁷ The researchers suggested that interviewers' judgments must be based on general impressions or cues that are not accurately described, and they raised the issue of to what extent interview content is actually important in making judgments about the interviewee.

Wright, Carter, and Fowler (1967) attempted to determine how valuable the "structured oral interview" is to an overall selection system. They designed a quantifiable oral interview to be administered by trained interviewers and

compared interview data with the applicant's test scores.

Findings included the following:

- 1) The oral interview apparently measured characteristics/behaviors different from the written test since there was no consistent relationship between scores in the interview and scores from tests.
- 2) Improved inter-rater reliability was probably due to interviewer training; consequently, the number of interviewers needed to make selection decisions (multiple interviewers vs. individual) is related to the quality and amount of training received.⁵⁸

Trends in Interviewing

The dramatic impact of antidiscriminatory legislation upon the selection process has been emphasized previously in this paper. A clear-cut need for standardized interviewer training has emerged as a result the new restrictions and requirements.

For many years, theorists have pointed to a probable gap between what has been learned about interviewing through research and what is actually applied.⁵⁹ The dearth of trained, skilled interviewers that has apparently existed in the past is no longer permissible in today's personnel environment.

A number of comprehensive interviewer training programs have been developed recently. An analysis of two of these programs has yielded the following content themes:

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING STANDARDIZED JOB CRITERIA AS THE BASIS FOR EVALUATION IS EMPHASIZED. The goal is for all interviewers to attempt to measure the same thing in interviewees. "Position dimensions" are used as a basis for evaluating job applicants. These dimensions can include such qualities as "energy level," "oral communication skills," or "problem analysis ability," etc. and are determined to be critical for successful performance of the job in question. The goal of this procedure is to take as much subjectivity out of the selection process as possible--dimensions are based on identifying what characteristics are essential for success in the job rather than what the "ideal applicant" looks and acts like. Interviewers are trained to ask questions that will tell whether or not sufficient levels of these dimensions exist in the applicant.

CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW IS FOCUSED ON WHAT APPLICANT HAS LEARNED IN PAST EXPERIENCES THAT HE CAN BRING TO THE JOB. The interviewee's behavioral learning from early childhood through the present is stressed. The interviewer is trained to illicit both positive and negative information--accomplishments and mistakes--and ask the interviewee to tell how those experiences have prepared him for the job in question. Topic areas covered usually include: early development, educational experiences, work experience, and current life patterns or activities. Interviewers are trained to gear all questions to job criteria. They are advised, for example, "If you wouldn't know what to do with

the answer, don't ask the question."

USE OF ASSESSMENT CENTER TECHNIQUES IN SELECTION

INTERVIEWING. Interviewees take part in behavioral simulations of situations similar to on-the-job situations. One of the goals is to slow down the decision-making process and allow many facets and dimensions of the interviewee to emerge.

Many of the current training programs have been developed to counter-act some of the negative things about selection interviewing identified in the research literature. For instance, ways to counter-act such tendencies as making hasty evaluations and stereotyping have been built into these programs. It will remain to be seen how successfully the training goals have been met.

SUMMARY

This chapter has been an attempt to review the literature pertaining to the selection system and the selection interview. The crucial role played by the recruitment and selection function within the organization has been emphasized. Effects of recent legal restrictions have been discussed and the interviewer and interviewee roles have been explored. Research studies specifically related to decision-making have been reviewed and trends in the field have been highlighted. In the next chapter, specific procedures followed in this study are outlined.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Although there are different types of selection interviews, the college recruitment interview was chosen as the focus of this study. Specifically, the research was designed to 1) obtain an overview of selection procedures as they are currently being implemented in a number of organizations, and 2) investigate some of the primary factors that affect decision-making as it occurs in selection interviewing.

Data Collection

Data was collected via questionnaire and patterned interview. Overall design of the study included the following procedures:

1) A three-page questionnaire was administered to personnel specialists in both the public and private sectors of the business community to acquire data about the mechanics of decision-making in selection interviews and attitudes about government regulations.

2) Two college recruitment interviews were videotaped for evaluation. Interviews were conducted by the same interviewer and were approximately 25 minutes in length. Interviews were analyzed by the researcher and an interview guide was then constructed containing questions designed to

probe reactions of professional interviewers to specific skills and behaviors of the interviewees and the interviewer. Finally, the videotapes were shown to professional interviewers who were then interviewed in depth by the researcher about their evaluations of the interviews.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Content

A questionnaire was designed to survey current recruitment and selection procedures with a specific focus upon factors which significantly affect the decision-making process.

Objectives of the Interview

The first question asked respondents to think about goals and objectives of the selection interview and then identify their primary objective in conducting an interview. The following choices were presented:

- _____ providing information to the interviewee about the job.
- _____ determining a candidate's non-personal qualifications--i.e., training, experience, grades, etc.
- _____ finding out what kind of person the candidate is.

Amount of Time Interviewers do the Talking

Next, respondents were asked to reflect upon their interviewing style and estimate the percentage of time during the interview that they do the talking:

<u> </u> 40%	<u> </u> 60%	<u> </u> 75%	<u> </u> 90%
<u> </u> 50%	<u> </u> 70%	<u> </u> 80%	<u> </u> other

Level of Interviewer Confidence about their Decisions

Since interviewers differ in their confidence levels about decisions made during and after the interview, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of confidence about decisions or recommendations they make as a result of the interviews they conduct, by choosing one of the following:

<u> </u> 50%	<u> </u> 70%	<u> </u> 80%	<u> </u> 100%
<u> </u> 60%	<u> </u> 75%	<u> </u> 90%	<u> </u> other

Degree to Which Interviewers Believe Information from Interviewees

The extent to which interviewers believe in the validity of information given by interviewees was explored next. Respondents were asked to think back on their interviews and estimate the percentage of information from interviewees that they generally believe to be truthful:

<u> </u> 50%	<u> </u> 70%	<u> </u> 80%	<u> </u> 100%
<u> </u> 60%	<u> </u> 75%	<u> </u> 90%	<u> </u> other

When Decision-Making Occurs

The next question attempted to pin-point when decision-making usually occurs in a selection interview. Respondents were asked to judge when, in the course of a 30-minute interview, most interviewers have made a conclusive judgment about the desirability of the candidates from the following:

_____ based on resume	_____ 20 mins.
_____ 5 mins.	_____ 25 mins.
_____ 10 mins.	_____ 30 mins.
_____ 15 mins.	

Factors Used to "Size Up" the Interviewee

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to examine their decision-making process by listing some factors they considered to be important in "sizing up" an interviewee and making the hiring decision.

Complaints Made about Interviewees

In the next open-ended question, respondents were asked to focus upon some of the negative factors that lead to rejection of candidates or contribute to unfavorable evaluations. Specifically, they were asked to list complaints they most frequently make about interviewees or complaints they hear made about interviewees by other interviewers.

Bias in Decision-Making

The operation of bias within the interview process was investigated in the next question. Respondents were asked to describe how they minimize the effects of their personal biases when they evaluate candidates and make decisions.

Legal Regulations and the Selection Interview

Attitudes of respondents about legal regulations applied to the selection process were the focus of the next three questions. First, respondents were asked in an open-ended question to comment about their feelings concerning legal restraints placed upon the interviewing process. Next, in a forced choice question, respondents were asked to choose which of the following terms most accurately describes current legal regulations: 1) "hindrance," 2) "neutral," 3) "helpful." And finally, respondents were asked to identify sources from which they generally get information about legal developments.

Techniques Considered to be Effective in Selection Interviewing

In the next open-ended question, respondents were asked to think about their interviewing style and to list any techniques or questions that they had found to be particularly useful or effective.

DECISION FACTORS

The final page of the questionnaire contained a list of 28 interviewee characteristics. Respondents were asked to decide how much importance they would attach to each of the characteristics when evaluating an interviewee, in the following manner:

	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	Negatively Rated
1. <u>Enthusiasm</u>					
2. <u>Ability to Communicate Orally</u>					
3. <u>Emotional Stability</u>					
4. <u>Aggressiveness and Initiative</u>					
5. <u>Confidence in Self</u>					
6. <u>Moral Standards</u>					
7. <u>Leadership Potential</u>					
8. <u>Pleasant Personality</u>					
9. <u>Writing Skills</u>					

(continued)

	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	Negatively Rated
10. <u>Poise in the Interview</u>					
11. <u>Interest in People</u>					
12. <u>Good Personal Appearance</u>					
13. <u>Good Scholastic Record</u>					
14. <u>Prepared for the Interview in Knowing about the Company</u>					
15. <u>Formulated Long-Range Goals and Objectives</u>					
16. <u>Participated in Extracurricular Activities in School</u>					
17. <u>Willing to Travel</u>					
18. <u>Humility</u>					
19. <u>Realistic Expectations of Salary</u>					
20. <u>Willingness to Accept Routine Assignments</u>					
21. <u>Specialized Courses</u>					
22. <u>Liberal Arts Courses</u>					
23. <u>Work Experience of Particular Type</u>					
24. <u>Married</u>					
25. <u>Compatible with Me</u>					
26. <u>Loyalty</u>					
27. <u>Efficient</u>					
28. <u>Biased</u>					

After completing this check-list, respondents were then asked to identify five of these factors which most frequently lead to rejection of candidates when they are not present.

Questionnaire Sample

A list of contacts in prospective organizations who might be willing to participate in the study was compiled by the researcher with the assistance of Fred Madaus, Placement Director of the School of Business at the University of Kansas.

Contact was then established in a number of these organizations and in several other organizations known to the researcher. The liaison person in each organization was responsible for distributing and collecting questionnaires administered in his/her organization. It was stipulated that all those completing the questionnaire have direct responsibility for conducting college recruitment interviews for entry level management positions. Aside from that stipulation, liaison persons were free to distribute questionnaires at random within their organizations. Sixty-six questionnaires were distributed, collected, and tabulated for analysis and reporting in Chapter IV.

Analysis of the Data

The data was tabulated and analyzed in two ways. Answers to the open-ended questions were listed and then

content analyzed to identify the most frequently occurring themes for each question. The data from closed questions was compiled into frequency tables and then listed in rank order.

VIDEOTAPING OF RECRUITMENT INTERVIEWS

In the next step, two college recruitment interviews were videotaped in the Communication Department Studios of the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Interviews of approximately 25 minutes in length were conducted by the Manager of Employee Relations of a Fortune 500 corporation.

Two male students at the University of Kansas participated as interviewees. One interviewee was a graduate student completing an M.A. in Communication Studies. The other was an undergraduate who would be completing a Bachelor of General Studies Degree at the end of the semester. The interviews were "bona fide" selection interviews in which both interviewees were seeking information about possible career opportunities with the corporation represented. The interviewer was recruiting for entry level positions as vacancies occurred in the organization.

THE INTERVIEWS

Interview Content

On the basis of an initial analysis of the taped interviews by the researcher, an interview guide was constructed which asked judges to evaluate both the interviewees and the interviewer.

Table 1
Interview Guide

Interviewee:

1. What over-all rating would you assign to the interviewee? (scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being high)
2. What are some of the most significant things about the interviewee that contribute to this rating?
3. What nonverbal cues or behaviors were significant in your evaluation of the interviewee? Positive or negative?
4. What were some of the interviewee's major weaknesses demonstrated in this interview?
5. What were some of the interviewee's major strengths?
6. Did you feel that any of the interviewee answers were rehearsed or "canned?"
7. What, if any, additional information would you like to have gotten from this interviewee?

Interviewer:

1. What over-all rating would you give this interviewer? (scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being high)
2. What are some of the most significant factors that contributed to this rating?
3. How would you rate the interviewer on the organization and content of the questions asked?
4. How would you rate the interviewer on skill in probing? (1 to 7 scale)
5. How would you rate the interviewer on ability to set favorable climate and build rapport? (1 to 7 scale)
6. Did the interviewer believe the information given by the interviewee? Yes? No?

continued

Table 1 (con.)

Interviewer (con.):

7. How would you rate the interviewer on listening skills? (1 to 7 scale)
 8. What additional interviewer techniques might have been useful in this particular interview?
 9. Was this fairly typical of other college recruitment interviews? Why?
-

Procedures

Procedures for showing the videotape and conducting the follow-up interviews were as follows:

1) Prior to viewing the videotaped interview, judges who had not previously completed the questionnaire were asked to complete the checklist of 28 interviewee characteristics. The same rankings--"essential" to "unimportant"--were used.

2) One of the videotaped interviews was then shown to each of the 24 judges. Tape-viewing sessions were scheduled and conducted over a three-month period in order to accommodate the participants and the researcher. Judges were randomly assigned to view either Interview #1 or #2.

3) An interview was conducted with each of the judges immediately following the tape-viewing. In cases where more than one judge viewed the tape at one time, provisions were made to conduct each interview separately and in private so that judges could not overhear other judges'

responses. In order to facilitate making comparisons between interviewees and variables affecting the decision-making process, 12 judges were asked to view the first taped interview and 12 to view the second.

Judge Sample

Twenty-four individuals responsible for college recruiting interviewing at the entry level of management were selected to be judges in this study. Some of the judges were people who had filled out the questionnaire in the first part of the study, and some were obtained through contacts in organizations known to the researcher.

The 24 judges were designated as follows:

- 10 personnel directors or managers of employee relations
- 5 personnel specialists or personnel supervisors
- 9 persons not directly in personnel but nevertheless responsible for college recruiting in their functional area

Organizations represented by the 24 judges can be classified as follows:

- private industry.....19
- governmental agencies.....4
- public utilities.....1

Evaluation of the Interview Data

Responses to each interview question were listed individually. For questions asking for numerical data, responses were tabulated and compiled for statistical reporting.

Common responses to open-ended questions were quantified and then all responses were qualitatively analyzed. Numerical data and summarized responses to open-ended questions will be reported separately for Interviews #1 and #2 in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Due to the length of the discussion of data resulting from analysis of the questionnaire and the two interviews, results for each of the instruments will be reported in separate chapters. This chapter will deal with results and analysis of the questionnaire data, while Chapters V and VI will present results and analysis of the interviews.

The questionnaire in this study focused upon certain specific issues related to decision-making in the selection interview. Sixty-six recruiters and other personnel specialists completed a three-page questionnaire investigating the objectives of their interviews, their estimated amount of participation, their confidence in their decisions, the time that it takes to make a decision, the kinds of decisions that they make about candidates, the kinds of information used in making those decisions, and their reactions to legal regulations on the selection interview.

Answers to open-ended questions were listed separately and then content analyzed to identify the most frequently occurring themes. Data from closed questions were compiled into frequency tables and then rank-ordered.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVIEW

Respondents were asked to identify their greatest

objective in the interviews they conducted. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Greatest Objective of the Interview

Objectives	Number of Responses*
To provide information to the interviewee about the job	6
To determine a candidate's non-personal qualifications (training, experience, grades)	14
To find out what kind of person the candidate is	45

*N = 66

Results show that two-thirds picked the alternative--To find out what kind of person the candidate is--over the alternatives of determining a candidate's non-personal qualifications and of providing information about the job. This finding reinforces the view that interviewers value the interview as a means of evaluating such characteristics as appearance, communication skills, thinking processes, and personality style--as discussed in Chapter II. Also, results are similar to Downs' findings in his 1969 study.

PARTICIPATION

Respondents' views concerning participation in the interview were obtained via two questions.

Table 3 presents respondents' evaluations of the amount of time during their interviews that they do the talking.

Table 3
Amount of Time Interviewers Do the Talking
In the Interview

<u>2</u> 10%	<u>19</u> 40%	<u>10</u> 60%	<u>2</u> 75%
<u>4</u> 20%	<u>13</u> 50%	<u>2</u> 70%	
N = 57			

Over half the respondents believed that they talk 50% or less of the time in an interview. This would be expected in view of the primary objective of the interview stated in response to the previous question. Hence, if one wants to assess the "total candidate," it becomes necessary to force the interviewee to do a considerable amount of the talking. In general, this finding appears to reflect current trends in selection interviewing in which there is a focus upon the use of many open-ended and self-assessment questions which provide information about interviewee oral communication skills, attitudes, values, priorities, and thought processes.

It is interesting to note that 14 recruiters responded that they do more than 50% of the talking. It may be that they are the ones who stated that their primary purpose in the interview is to give information about the job, and one

might then assume that their overall interviewing style differs from the majority of respondents in other areas as well.

In another question related to participation, respondents were asked to indicate special techniques that they found most useful in the interview. Results for this open-ended question emphasized three techniques related to participation: 1) getting the interviewee to do much of the talking, 2) using open-ended questions to get the interviewee to "open up," and 3) creating an informal, discussion atmosphere.

REACTION TO LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Respondents' attitudes about the effect of legal regulations upon the selection interview were elicited in several ways. Responses to an open-ended question in which recruiters were asked to comment about their feelings concerning current legal regulations were as follows: 43% felt that there were too many regulations, 57% thought the number was "about right," and no respondents thought that there was a need for more regulations.

Some respondents who felt there were too many regulations pointed out the fact that the basic idea behind the regulations was sound, but that often they served to work against both parties. They cited incidences in which interviewers were prevented from getting some kinds of information about interviewees that would be helpful in determining potential for success, and also commented that interviewees

might in fact benefit from the sharing of such information.

Respondents who felt the number of regulations was about right felt they served to enhance "professionalism" in the interview. They cited abuses in the past as contributory to the need for current restrictions and regulations.

In a forced choice question that followed, respondents were asked to choose one of the following terms to describe their overall attitude about legal regulations: 1) "hindrance," 2) "neutral," or 3) "helpful." Results indicated that 25% viewed legal regulations generally as a hindrance, 50% were neutral toward the regulations, and about 25% viewed them as helpful.

When asked to comment about the sources from which information about legal developments usually came to them, respondents cited personnel journals and legal departments in their own organizations as the chief sources. All respondents indicated that communication channels carrying information about legal regulations to them were open and known to them. One commented, "...it (legal information) flows across my desk unsolicited!"

DECISIONS

A number of questions dealt with interview decisions. In this section, respondents were asked to look at their confidence about decisions, when they make decisions, the role of bias, and their belief in the validity of interviewee information.

Level of Interviewer Confidence

Table 4 contains respondents' assessment of their degree of confidence about the decisions and recommendations they make as a result of the interviews they conduct.

Table 4

Interviewer's Level of Confidence About Interview Decisions

<u>4</u> 50%	<u>7</u> 75%	<u>1</u> 95%
<u>3</u> 60%	<u>21</u> 80%	<u>4</u> 100%
<u>6</u> 70%	<u>16</u> 90%	

N = 62

Results indicate that respondents have a fairly high degree of confidence in the decisions they make. Two-thirds said they were 80% to 100% confident of their decisions. One major factor influencing the level of confidence expressed by the respondents might be their trust in what interviewees tell them. Responses to the next question appear to support this notion.

Interviewers Belief in the Validity of Information From Interviewees

Table 5 presents respondents' estimate of how valid the information given by interviewees generally is.

Table 5
Percentage of Information from Interviewees
Considered to be Valid

<u>2</u> 60%	<u>4</u> 75%	<u>1</u> 85%	<u>1</u> 95%
<u>2</u> 70%	<u>15</u> 80%	<u>21</u> 90%	<u>12</u> 100%
N = 58			

Results indicate that respondents generally believe most of the information from interviewees, and approximately 20% indicated that they believe all that interviewees tell them.

When Decisions are Made

Respondents were asked to decide when, in a 30 minute interview, most interviewers have made a rather conclusive judgment about the desirability of the interviewee. Table 6 contains results from the question.

Table 6
When Decision-Making Occurs in a 30-Minute Interview

Time	Number of Responses (N = 59)
5 minutes	7
10 minutes	23
15 minutes	14
20 minutes	12
24 minutes	1
30 minutes	2
Post Interview	5

Results indicate that for those respondents who thought decisions were made sometime during the 30 minute interview, the average time was 13.5 minutes. Half of the respondents felt that decisions are usually made within the first ten minutes.

On the other hand, five respondents choose "post interview" as the time when decision-making occurs.

As noted in Chapter II, a current theme in interviewer training programs is encouraging interviewers to postpone decision-making until after the final interview and until data from all parts of the selection system can be integrated. These results do not reflect this point of view, however.

Several suppositions might be offered as to why interviewers responded as they did. First, information was not gathered as to how many respondents had recently participated in training programs or seminars--thus it is possible that their response might have been different if they had recently been exposed to training. Second, recruitment interviews are traditionally structured so that it is the first half in which data about the interviewee that affects decision-making is usually gathered, while the second half is usually focused upon talking about the specific job and imparting information about the company to the interviewee. And, third, it may be that the majority of respondents felt that it is unrealistic to try to postpone decision-making beyond the first ten or 15 minutes of the interview.

FACTORS INTERVIEWERS USE TO "SIZE UP" INTERVIEWEES

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to list things about interviewees that they often use as a basis for evaluation.

The most frequently mentioned factor was ability to express oneself orally. Respondents talked about the importance of oral communication skills when "sizing up" candidates, and mentioned specifically the ability to express ideas and goals clearly and effectively as an important criteria for judging interviewee desirability.

This finding supports numerous studies in the field, and is reiterated in responses to the final section of the questionnaire in which "good oral communication skills" was found to be the most important decision factor in a rank-ordered list of 28.

Also frequently mentioned as a factor that interviewers use in evaluating interviewees was attitude--defined as interest in the job or company, manner in which the interviewee asked questions of the interviewer, and whether or not the interviewee had "realistic" career or job expectations.

MOST FREQUENT COMPLAINTS MADE ABOUT INTERVIEWEES

In this open-ended question, respondents were asked to express their most frequent complaints about interviewees and/or those that they hear made most frequently.

Lack of clearly defined career goals and objectives was the most frequently mentioned complaint. One respondent

mentioned interviewees who have no idea about the type of position they're interested in as his biggest complaint. Another talked about interviewees who have done little self-assessment about their career interests and direction.

The next most frequently mentioned complaint was lack of preparation for the interview. Respondents cited incidents where interviewees came to the interview with little or no knowledge of the organization or the job to be filled, and also those who did not ask questions.

THE ROLE OF BIAS IN DECISION-MAKING

Respondents were next asked to consider how their personal biases might affect their interview decisions by disclosing ways they try to minimize bias and increase objectivity in their interviews.

Acknowledging that bias does exist was the most frequently mentioned method of increasing objectivity in interview decisions. Respondents commented that they made a conscious effort to be aware of the potential for bias and then to identify "danger areas" in which they felt they were particularly vulnerable. One respondent commented that he tried to be aware of how he felt on certain days and how that might affect his ability to be objective.

Another frequently mentioned method for combating bias was comparing information about the interviewee's background and experience to specific job criteria. Respondents

commented that they set guidelines related to specific skills and abilities needed for the job ahead of time, and then reviewed all information from the interviewee as it related to each requirement before making a final decision. Other respondents felt that the structured interview, in which all candidates are asked the same questions, was the best way to fairly compare the interviewee to job criteria and thus cut down the effects of bias.

Interestingly, only four respondents commented that they did not worry about bias or feel that it was a potential problem for them in decision-making. These respondents stated that they could trust their own reactions and impressions when making interview decisions and that it was unnecessary for them to be concerned about personal biases.

Decision Factors

The last page of the questionnaire contained a checklist of 28 characteristics of interviewees that were to be rated as either "essential," "very important," "important," "somewhat important," or "negative" as factors effecting decision-making.

To determine the rank order of the decision factors, numbers were assigned to each category--i.e., "essential" equaled 5, "very important" equaled 4, etc. Then, their weights were multiplied by the number of people choosing that rating for a given decision factor. The sum across ratings for that decision factor was compiled, and averages

were compiled. The decision factors were then ranked in order of their averages.

Table 7 presents this list.

Table 7
Importance of Decision Factors

	\bar{X}	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	Negative
1. Ability to communicate orally	1.560	42	34	6	0	0
2. Emotional stability	1.853	26	43	12	1	0
3. Self-confidence	1.867	27	42	12	2	0
4. Enthusiasm	2.000	19	44	15	2	0
5. Aggressiveness/initiative	2.097	15	47	17	3	0
6. Efficient	2.207	15	40	22	5	0
7. Writing skills	2.228	9	47	26	1	0
8. Leadership potential	2.280	15	31	34	2	0
9. Poise in interview	2.289	9	42	31	1	0
10. Pleasant personality	2.308	11	36	32	2	0
11. Good personal appearance	2.370	6	41	32	2	0
12. Good scholastic record	2.445	8	32	41	2	0

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

	\bar{X}	Essential	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	Negative
13. Moral standards	2.468	12	26	33	8	0
14. Interest in people	2.481	8	31	40	4	0
15. Loyalty	2.560	8	27	40	7	0
16. Prepared for the interview	2.566	6	34	33	10	0
17. Realistic salary expectations	2.566	11	25	36	11	0
18. Willingness to accept routine assignments	2.675	9	23	34	13	1
19. Formulated long range goals	2.707	6	22	41	12	1
20. Specific work experience	2.805	6	25	18	23	0
21. Participated in extra-curricular activities	2.862	4	19	38	18	1
22. Willing to travel	2.975	10	11	32	25	2
23. Specialized courses	3.096	4	10	44	24	1
24. Humility	3.259	2	9	37	32	1
25. Compatible with me	3.325	1	10	39	32	2
26. Liberal arts courses	3.385	0	5	42	35	1
27. Biased	3.700	2	8	19	21	20
28. Married	3.987	0	0	7	68	6

Results show that general personal characteristics such as communication skills, emotional stability, self-confidence, and enthusiasm are rated of greater importance than specific work experience, courses taken, and specific activities. This seems to reinforce the objective of the interview chosen by most respondents--discovering what kind of person the interviewee is.

Additionally, it should be noted that almost every one of the characteristics was thought to be important to someone completing the questionnaire, and, therefore, might affect the decision-making process.

Finally, respondents were asked to think about factors that lead to rejection of candidates. They were asked to look at the list of 28 factors and decide which ones--when lacking--most frequently contribute to rejection of an interviewee.

Results indicate that the items mentioned most frequently were lack of emotional stability, lack of enthusiasm, an unpleasant personality, inability to communicate orally, lack of clearly defined career goals, and lack of preparation for the interview.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: INTERVIEWEE PORTION OF INTERVIEWS 1 AND 2

Introduction

Before the results and analyses of Interview #1 are presented, a short discussion of some of the major factors affecting judges' analyses of the videotaped interviews seems in order.

First, it must be pointed out that this study deals with perceptual data. When judges were asked to react to and evaluate the skills and behaviors of the interviewer and interviewee, each judge did so from the vantage point of his personal frame of reference. Past experiences, personal values, thinking patterns, and many other factors functioned as part of a "filtering" process which necessarily affected each judges' evaluations and conclusions about the participants in the interview.

In addition to personal factors affecting judges' perceptions of the interviewer and interviewee, judges were also making evaluations within a corporate frame of reference--i.e., each judge was also a member of an organization and thereby came to the tape-viewing session with a certain "point of view" about what interviewee characteristics might be potentially of most value to that organization.

In one instance, for example, six members of one corporation participated as judges. When conducting interviews with each of these judges, the researcher found that the presence of "creativity" in an interviewee was one of the characteristics mentioned by each of the six judges as essential for employment in that organization.

As with any research of this type, semantic differences in interpretation must also be acknowledged. When asking judges to describe and evaluate characteristics and behaviors, it is impossible to know and document the latitude of meaning operating for each individual when they described the interviewee as "compatible" or "over-confident," etc. Also, when judges were asked to assign numerical ratings to interview participants, we know that a "5" or a "3" may not mean precisely the same thing to each judge.

In this chapter, results and analyses of judge's evaluations of the Interviewee portions of Interview #1 and #2 are presented. Responses to each interview question were listed individually and common responses were quantified and then all responses were qualitatively analyzed. Numerical data was tabulated for listing in tables and computing of mean scores. Results and analysis of judges' evaluations of the Interviewer portion of Interviews #1 and #2 are presented in Chapter VI.

Interviewee Section--Interview #1

Content analysis of interview #1 by the researcher disclosed that responses of interviewee #1 were lengthy in terms of the number of words and sentences used to answer a specific question. For example, interviewee #1's answers were frequently punctuated with "ahs," pauses, and attempts to rephrase and "backtrack." Judges' evaluations follow.

Question #1: WHAT OVERALL RATING WOULD YOU ASSIGN TO THE INTERVIEWEE? (Scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being high)

Table 8 contains numerical ratings assigned to the interviewee by the 12 judges.

Table 8
Overall Interviewee Numerical Ratings

Judge	Rating	(N = 12)
Judge 1	4	
Judge 2	4	
Judge 3	3	
Judge 4	3	
Judge 5	3	
Judge 6	3	
Judge 7	4	
Judge 8	4	
Judge 9	6	
Judge 10	5	
Judge 11	5	
Judge 12	5	

The overall mean for the interviewee was 4.1, with scores ranging from 3 to 6.

Question #2: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THINGS ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RATING?

This question asked judges to explain and justify the numerical ratings given to the interviewee in question #1. Judges were asked to talk about their impressions of the interviewee from the perspective of a potential employer. This question consistently elicited statements about interviewee strengths and weaknesses. These strengths and weaknesses were then reiterated by judges in response to question #4 (WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INTERVIEWEE'S MAJOR WEAKNESSES AS DEMONSTRATED IN THIS INTERVIEW?) and question #5 (WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INTERVIEWEE'S MAJOR STRENGTHS AS DEMONSTRATED IN THIS INTERVIEW?). Therefore, responses to the three questions have been combined and are reported together in this section.

Interviewee Weaknesses

The following interviewee traits and characteristics were identified by one or more judges as negative factors or weaknesses that were taken into consideration when assigning an overall rating to the interviewee (not in order of frequency):

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| -changed jobs | -had unrealistic career goals/expectations |
| -changed colleges | -gave disorganized responses |
| -left X corporation | -gave inappropriate responses |
| -gave "pat" or stilted answers | (continued) |

- | | |
|---|--|
| -failed to ask for clarification | -used "yeah," "uh," and "well" too frequently |
| -didn't field questions well | -didn't anticipate questions well |
| -hadn't developed responses ahead of time | -lacked enthusiasm |
| -didn't challenge interviewer when asked "unimaginative questions" (i.e., Where do you want to be in five years?) | -didn't ask questions about the organization |
| | -didn't try to sell himself adequately |
| -not prepared for the interview | -poor oral communication skills |
| -not motivated | -gave evasive answers |
| -hid behind a "facade"-- not sincere | -too relaxed and casual |
| -didn't listen well | -over-confident |
| -lacked initiative | -gave incomplete answers |
| | -lacked warmth and animation |
| -poor manners (had a cold but didn't excuse himself when he coughed, etc.) | -hadn't done enough self-assessment prior to the interview |

Content analysis of judges' responses to question 2 and 4 indicated that the most frequently identified interviewee weaknesses could be categorized as follows: 1) poor overall quality of responses to interviewer questions, and 2) indecisiveness about career goals and direction.

Ten of 12 judges commented that poor quality of responses was a major interviewee weakness and described responses as often "vague," "incomplete," and "disorganized." Interviewee discussion of experiences at X Corporation was cited as illustrative of this problem. Judges felt this area of the interview contained many "rambling" responses and also

demonstrated a lack of forethought and preparation for the interview. It should be noted that several of these ten judges attributed some of the poor quality of the interviewee's responses to a lack of skillful questioning by the interviewer. In fact, as will be noted in a later section and discussed in Chapter VII, the overall numerical ratings for the interviewer and interviewee in Interview 1 and the interviewer and interviewee in Interview 2 were generally similar. Nevertheless, while acknowledging what were considered to be interviewer deficiencies, most judges maintained that the poor quality of many interviewee responses was primarily a function of an inability to present well-organized and well-thought-out answers.

On the other hand, two judges did not feel the quality of interviewee responses was a problem. Both commented that responses were adequate and even above average--considering what they termed the "poor quality of questions posed to the interviewee." As might be expected, these two judges differed from the other judges in their ratings of the interviewer (overall ratings for the interviewer from these two judges were a 2 and a 3 while the other judges' ratings ranged from 3 to 5 with a mean of 3.9). One of the two judges gave the interviewee the highest rating (6) and stated that poor interviewer skills had probably prevented the interviewee from demonstrating his full potential in the interview. The other judge felt that interviewer expertise

was certainly lacking but that the interviewee still only merited a rating of 4.

Indecisiveness and lack of direction were also cited frequently as areas of interviewee weakness. Eight of 12 judges mentioned a pattern of frequent changes in direction (change of major, change of colleges, and leaving X Corporation) as cause for negative evaluations of the interviewee. Several commented that not only did the interviewee make these frequent changes, but that he also seemed unable to articulate precisely why he had done so. The feeling among these judges was that the interviewee was generally unclear about his short-term and long-term goals, and that when he did state a goal--i.e., to manage and supervise people--it was far too unspecific. Another reason given by judges for concluding that the interviewee was indecisive was his disclosure that he chose one of the colleges he attended because a group of his friends were going there.

Other frequently mentioned interviewee weaknesses included lack of animation and enthusiasm, the use of "buzz" words or phrases that judges felt were attempts to please the interviewer (i.e., desiring "a position in mangement" and wanting "decision-making responsibility"), and the fact that the interviewee had left X Corporation (a well-known corporation acknowledged to be a leader in its industry). In regard to the last factor, several judges expressed the concern that since the interviewee previously left such a

prestigious corporation, he might also leave theirs.

Interviewee Strengths

The following interviewee traits and characteristics were identified by one or more judges as being positive factors or strengths which were taken into consideration when assigning an overall rating (not in order of frequency):

- | | |
|---|---|
| -oral communication skill | -self-confidence |
| -aggressiveness | -appearance/dress |
| -compatibility | -poise/composure |
| -attempted to answer all questions | -relaxed personality style |
| -had worked for X Corporation | -competitiveness |
| -maturity | -"team player" |
| -able to "think on his feet" | -listened well |
| -"good" responses to "bad" questions | -good moral background (medium to short, well-groomed hair was noted as illustrative of this trait) |
| -sincerity | |
| -acknowledged his limitations | -humility |
| -"sold" himself well | -asked for clarification |
| -intelligent | -good work experience |
| -pleasant personality | -good understanding of his strengths and weaknesses |
| -explained well why he left X Corporation | |

Content analysis of responses to questions 2 and 5 produced four categories of interviewee strengths that were most frequently mentioned by judges as contributing to their overall rating of the interviewee. These strengths were

1) self-confidence, 2) appearance/dress, 3) willingness to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses, and 4) oral communications skills.

Six of 12 judges perceived the interviewee to be generally self-confident. Both verbal and nonverbal behavior were cited as illustrative of this conclusion (see responses to question 3, Interviewee Section of Interview #1). Interviewee statements about feeling that he could work well with peers and subordinates were noted as demonstrating self-confidence and were rated favorably by judges. Also noted were his "poise" and "composure" throughout the interview. Interestingly, although these judges considered the interviewee's degree of self-confidence to be an overall strength, several judges pointed out the fact that at times during the interview this trait could have been considered "cockiness" or "over-confidence." One judge commented that some members of his organization--especially older members of management--would have been "turned off" by this interviewee's degree of self-confidence.

Four of 12 judges cited the interviewee's overall appearance and dress as a strength. His attire (grey slacks, dark sports coat) was described as being appropriate for an entry level applicant and contributory to an overall favorable impression.

Four of 12 judges cited the interviewee's willingness to acknowledge his limitations as a positive factor. These

judges emphasized that candor in an interviewee is somewhat rare and a real plus factor. The interviewee's admission of uneasiness about handling a discipline problem, for example, enhanced his image and led them to assume that he was sincere and candid in other areas as well. One judge described the interviewee as "humble" and felt this was a positive characteristic, especially for entry level candidates.

Four of 12 judges mentioned good oral communication skills as an interviewee strength. When asked by the researcher to elaborate on this evaluation--especially in view of the numerous comments about the poor quality of interviewee responses made by many of these judges--judges specified diction, word choice, and syntax as the elements of oral communication specifically being evaluated. Quality of voice and depth of vocabulary were also mentioned.

As would be expected in view of the low overall numerical rating assigned to this interviewee, more negative than positive characteristics were noted by judges.

Question #3: WHAT NONVERBAL CUES OR BEHAVIORS WERE SIGNIFICANT IN YOUR EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEWEE? WERE THEY POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

Table 9 contains summarized comments by judges about the nonverbal behavior of the interviewee.

Table 9
Interviewee Nonverbal Cues

Judge	Rating Assigned to Interviewee	Positive Factors	Negative Factors	(N = 12)
1	4	-----	His poise and casualness made him able to take control of the interview... he over-did it.	
2	4	-----	His posture made him seem over-confident.	
3	3	Appearance and demeanor were good.	His lack of facial expression and animation were disturbing.	
4	3	-----	Unanimated, unenthusiastic facial expression, posture indicated lack of alertness.	
5	3	-----	Hand gestures further reinforced an image of indecisiveness. Poor posture also.	
6	3	Good eye contact, openness, and trust shown by hands and arms.	-----	
7	4	Gestures contradicted verbal content since they showed positiveness and decisiveness.	-----	

(continued)

Table 9 (con.)

Judge	Rating Assigned to Interviewee	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
8	4	Posture and appearance favorable.	Cough was distracting.
9	6	He tried to be friendly with a smile but she didn't respond or reinforce.	-----
10	5	-----	Poor eye contact, hands showed nervousness.
11	5	Gestures and posture showed relaxation and worked in his favor.	-----
12	5	Overall appearance showed confidence.	Pauses and silences showed lack of organized thinking; groping gestures indicated groping for answers.

As shown in Table 9, six judges felt interviewee nonverbal cues contributed to a negative image, four felt they contributed to a positive image, and two felt they were both negative and positive.

The range of reasons given by judges for evaluating interviewee's nonverbals negatively can be seen in Table 9. Content analysis of responses to this question highlighted the importance of posture as part of interviewee behavior in an employment interview. Several of these judges commented that the interviewee's posture (sitting with crossed legs, sometimes leaning back in the chair, and generally appearing to be relaxed) appeared to be somewhat "cocky" or intimidating. One judge felt that the casual posture actually allowed the interviewee to take control of the interview at times and may have prevented the interviewer from probing where she should have.

Two judges commented on the lack of animation in facial expression which seemed to be indicative of a general lack of enthusiasm.

Three judges evaluated the interviewee's nonverbal behavior as generally positive. They cited an overall poised appearance and demeanor as contributing to a favorable image. Among these judges, "casualness" and relaxed mannerisms were considered helpful in improving interviewee ratings and somehow compensated for deficiencies in verbal content of responses to interviewer questions.

Two judges gave mixed ratings about nonverbal cues. Appearance and posture were considered positive yet lack of facial animation seemed to negate these characteristics.

It is interesting to note the wide range of the interpretation and evaluations of the interviewee's nonverbal behavior. All 12 judges viewed exactly the same interview, yet interviewee eye contact, for example, was considered "good" by one judge and "extremely poor" by another. The same was true for gestures.

Question #6: DID YOU FEEL ANY OF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS WERE REHEARSED OR "CANNED"?

Nine of the 12 judges felt that interviewee responses were generally spontaneous and unrehearsed. Interestingly, one of the primary reasons given for this conclusion was the interviewee's seeming inability to give clearly organized responses to many interviewer questions. For these judges, perceptions of the interviewee as "sincere" and "authentic" seemed to be reinforced by what they felt was his lack of organized thinking. One judge commented, "...they (the answers) were far too disorganized to be rehearsed."

The three remaining judges questioned the sincerity of some interviewee answers. For example, one said that he was suspicious when the interviewee said he had had no problems at X Corporation--yet he did leave that corporation. Additionally, the reason for leaving--to further his education--was considered by this judge to be primarily designed to tell

the interviewer something which she would rate favorably, as opposed to the "real" reason. Another judge referred to "buzz words" and phrases that he felt had been rehearsed by the interviewee and incorporated into the dialogue for purposes of impressing the interviewer. And, finally, one judge commented that he firmly believed that all interviewee's rehearse some answers and choose some "pat" responses which they feel may help "sell" themselves in the interview.

Question #7: WHAT, IF ANY, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE GOTTEN FROM THIS INTERVIEWEE?

Table 10 contains summarized responses of the 12 judges to this question.

Table 10

Additional Information Desired by Judges

Judge	Types of Information Desired	(N = 12)
1	Information about wife's career expectations and potential conflicts with his career.	
	Does he prefer a technical or a supervisory position primarily?	
2	How could his communication background be used in an organization specifically?	
	Specific courses taken and grades.	
	Accomplishments and responsibilities at X Corporation.	
3	Childhood and relationships with parents and brothers and sisters.	
	Leadership activities in high school and college.	
	What does he really want to do with his life?	

(continued)

Table 10 (con.)

Judge	Types of Information Desired
4	<p>Exactly what his job and responsibilities were at X Corporation.</p> <p>Grades and course content in high school and college.</p> <p>What he could do for their organization.</p>
5	<p>Early childhood and family relationships.</p> <p>Grades and course content in college.</p> <p>Information about his self-concept and where his self-confident attitude came from.</p> <p>What his job and responsibilities at X Corporation were.</p>
6	<p>Specific accomplishments rather than general statements about what he had done in the past.</p> <p>How he felt about the job responsibilities he's had in the past.</p>
7	<p>More information about his interest and abilities in the finance area.</p> <p>Information about his attitudes, values, and preferences.</p>
8	None...interviewer covered areas well.
9	None.
10	<p>Self-concept and self-assessment information (strengths and weaknesses, for example)</p> <p>Expectations for working conditions and upward mobility.</p>
11	<p>Information about personal life--hobbies, family interests, creative activities.</p> <p>Family background and experiences in his early years that would show a breadth of experience.</p>

(continued)

Table 10 (con.)

Judge	Types of Information Desired
12	<p>Specific information about how past experiences have prepared him for his career.</p> <p>Information about values and what is important to him.</p> <p>If he could create his "ideal" job, what would it be like?</p>

As indicated in Table 10, two of 12 judges felt that the interviewer had covered the areas adequately for a typical college recruitment interview, and that enough data had been obtained on which to make a hiring decision. Content analysis of responses of the ten remaining judges indicated that three areas were most frequently mentioned as ones in which judges would have liked additional information. These areas were 1) interviewee self-assessment, 2) information about grades and course content, and 3) specific job responsibilities at X Corporation.

Half of the ten judges suggested the need for more information about the interviewee's attitudes, values, and self-concept. Typical questions suggested included:

What is important to you?
 Whom do you respect and why?
 What kind of relationship did you have with your parents as a child?
 What do you want to do with your life?
 What would you contribute to our organization?
 Do you prefer to work alone or with others?

Judges suggested that this type of information is very important when evaluating an interviewee's level of creativity, identifying the type of work environment in which he is likely to be most productive, and predicting his potential for compatibility with other members of the organization. Several judges emphasized the importance of uncovering relationship problems with parents. They felt that such problems can imply an on-going problem with all authority figures including "the boss" and "the organization." These judges hastened to say that they would not automatically make this assumption about an interviewee, but they would definitely explore interviewee attitudes about authority and responsibility in greater depth if such problems had been disclosed.

A second area in which judges wanted more information was grades and coursework. In fact, during the interviews some judges expressed hesitancy about making any overall evaluation of the interviewee without this type of information in their hands. (Note: resume and transcripts were not provided to the judges in this study; all evaluations were made solely on the content of videotaped interviews.) Three-fourths of the judges assured the researcher that the interviewee would have to "look good on paper" before a job offer would ever be considered, no matter how impressive he/she might be in an interview.

The third area frequently mentioned was more information about the interviewee's experiences at X Corporation. The judges wanted information about exactly what his job responsibilities were (Note: interviewee job title was never identified by the interviewee or specifically asked for by the interviewer) and what his accomplishments and successes were while he worked there. These were the judges who faulted the interviewer for not covering this topic area in more depth and detail.

Interviewee Section--Interview #2

Content analysis by the researcher of responses of interviewee #2 showed that most responses were specific, complete, and generally addressed to the main point of the interviewer's question. Sentences were syntactically well-constructed and usually flowed in a logical and well-organized sequence. Judges' evaluations follow.

Question #1: WHAT OVERALL RATING WOULD YOU ASSIGN TO THE INTERVIEWEE? (scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being high)

Table 11 contains numerical ratings assigned to the interviewee by the 12 judges (see next page). Overall mean for the interviewee is 5.8, with scores ranging from 5 to 7.

Table 11
Overall Interviewee Numerical Ratings
(Interview #2)

Judge	Rating	(N = 12)
Judge 1	5	
Judge 2	6	
Judge 3	6	
Judge 4	5	
Judge 5	6	
Judge 6	6	
Judge 7	6	
Judge 8	6	
Judge 9	6	
Judge 10	7	
Judge 11	5	
Judge 12	5	

Question #2: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THINGS
ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO
THIS RATING?

(See this section of Interview #1 for preliminary comments about this question. The same method of analysis and reporting has been used for Interview #2.)

Interviewee Weaknesses

The following interviewee traits and characteristics were identified by one or more judges as negative, or weaknesses that were taken into consideration when assigning an overall rating to the interviewee:

- | | |
|--|---|
| -not enough breadth of activities in high school | -may have "embellished" experiences at Y Corporation somewhat |
| -didn't admit having any problems | -over-confident |

- too narrow a career focus (training)
- use of phrase "no problem" too frequently
- potential for personality conflicts perhaps
- tried to give answers interviewer wanted to hear
- responses too wordy
- unrealistic career expectations (to manage other people immediately, for example)
- inability to answer the question about what he liked least at Y Corporation
- rambling answers
- lack of empathy--not "in tune" with other people
- sometimes interrupted the interviewer
- answers seemed too "pat" or too good to be believable sometimes
- nervousness
- contradictory statements (tried to be on both sides of every issue)
- too broad interests--interested in everything
- too positive
- Lack of familiarity with compensation and benefits
- hair-style (medium long)
- lack of short-term goals
- more technically-oriented than people-oriented, even though he wanted personnel work

Content analysis of judges' responses to question 2 and 4 indicated that the most frequently identified interviewee weaknesses could be categorized as follows: 1) giving responses designed to please the interviewer, and 2) a tendency to "over-sell" himself.

Giving responses designed to please the interviewer was mentioned by seven of 12 judges as a major interviewee weakness. They described many of his answers as "attempts to cover all the bases" and felt that he tried to present himself as interested in, and able to do, everything.

Interestingly, judges did not define this as intentional lying or untruthfulness. Instead, they described these responses as being "unrealistic" or too "pat" to be believable. Also noted by several judges was what they felt was an attempt to be on both sides of many issues. For example, in response to an interviewer question concerning whether he would prefer to be a union negotiator or company personnel representative in labor relations mediation, the interviewee responded that both sides seemed equally interesting and challenging to him. Judges noted that this characteristic led to a number of contradictions in other responses.

The second frequently mentioned category of weaknesses was what judges described as the interviewee's tendency toward over-confidence or over-selling himself. Judges cited the interviewee's frequent assurances that there were "no problems" in his background when questioned by the interviewer in various topic areas as a kind of "red flag," or indication of something to be explored further. Judges felt this apparent inability or unwillingness to identify problems that he might have encountered in the past was somewhat unrealistic. Judges also suggested that there might be a relationship between this weakness and their perception of some of his responses as designed to please the interviewer. They presumably would focus on these areas in a second interview.

Interviewee Strengths

The following traits and characteristics were identified by one or more judges as being positive factors or strengths which were taken into consideration when assigning an overall rating to the interviewee:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| -poise | -ability to "think on his feet" |
| -sincerity | -oral communication skills |
| -well-organized thoughts | -"professional appearance" |
| -positive attitude | -experience/background |
| -ability to handle pressure | -ability to mediate conflict |
| -enthusiasm | -aggressiveness |
| -self-confidence | -leadership potential |
| -emotional stability | -maturity |
| -decisiveness | -motivation |
| -logical responses | -complete responses |
| -reasonable | -honest |
| -relaxed manner | -sold himself well |
| -clear responses | -capable |
| -personable | -intelligent |
| -voice and projection | -knowledgeable about communication |
| -clear career objectives | -let interviewer control the "ew" |
| -listened well | -eager |
| -animated | - "knew himself" |
| -realistic | |

Content analysis of responses to questions 2 and 5 produced five categories of interviewee strengths that were most frequently mentioned by judges as contributing to their overall rating of the interviewee. These strengths were 1) oral communication skills, 2) appearance/dress, 3) experience, 4) self-confidence, and 5) the quality of the responses.

The over-whelming choice among judges (mentioned by ten of 12) for the interviewee's major strength were his oral communication skills. Judges were particularly impressed with the depth of his vocabulary, the clarity of his messages, and the quality, tone, and projection of his voice. These judges described the interviewee as "very articulate."

The interviewee's overall appearance, including the way he was dressed (a three-piece business suit) was noted as a very positive factor in their evaluations. Judges felt that he had a "professional" appearance and demeanor that were in keeping with other strengths, such as his oral communication skills, good background, and variety of experience.

The interviewee's experiences--especially at Y Corporation as an intern responsible for setting up the initial steps in a computer program for the personnel department--were considered to be a very valuable asset in the evaluation. Although judges questioned whether or not he could have actually accomplished all the things that he claimed to have accomplished, they nevertheless emphasized the positive aspects of the experience and complimented him for "making

the most" of those experiences in the interview. His experience as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Kansas and his jobs during the high school years were also mentioned as valuable experiences by several judges.

Six of 12 judges mentioned self-confidence as an important interviewee strength. As noted in the section on interviewee weaknesses, a number of judges felt that the interviewee was often over-confident, rather than "self-confident." It appears that this is one characteristic that is particularly difficult to define and evaluate. Interestingly, some of the same judges who felt that the interviewee exhibited positive levels of self-confidence also faulted him for sometimes appearing over-confident. One might assume that a fine line of distinction exists between self-confidence and over-confidence, and that there is therefore an optimal level of self-confidence--anything above that becomes negatively rated and thus becomes a liability for the person being evaluated. Judges in this interview apparently felt that the interviewee wandered back and forth across that line of distinction throughout the course of the interview, but that a "self-confident" attitude was more characteristic of his behavior than "over-confidence."

The last area of strength was the overall quality of the interviewee's responses. Six of 12 judges commented favorably on the overall quality of the interviewee's responses and described them as clear and concise, well-organized, and

complete. Several judges suggested that the interviewee demonstrated a fine ability to "think on his feet" and to present logical and thorough responses to the interviewer's questions. Several judges felt that the quality of the responses surpassed the quality of the questions.

It should be noted that more positive than negative characteristics were mentioned by judges, which reinforces their highly favorable impression as indicated by the numerical ratings assigned.

Question #3: WHAT NONVERBAL CUES OR BEHAVIORS WERE SIGNIFICANT IN YOUR EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEWEE?

Table 12 contains summarized comments by judges about the nonverbal behavior of the interviewee.

Table 12

Interviewee Nonverbal Cues
(Interview #2)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors (N = 12)
1	-----	-----
2	-----	-----
3	-----	-----
4	-----	-----
5	Nonverbals reinforced his image of "openness," dynamism, and intensity.	-----
6	-----	-----

(continued)

Table 12 (con.)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
7	-----	Made him seem somewhat self-conscious and occasionally awkward.
8	Gestures emphasized his points well and made him seem "open." Good eye contact and relaxed facial expression.	-----
9	Good eye contact, animation with hands, seemed relaxed, poised, and sincere.	-----
10	Good eye contact, a "practiced" manner that was a positive.	-----
11	Hands showed expressiveness and openness.	-----
12	-----	Hands showed some nervousness.

As shown in Table 12, five of 12 judges had no comments or reactions to this question. Generally, these judges responded to the question by saying that they could not bring to mind anything significant about the interviewee's nonverbal behavior--either positive or negative. Of the judges who did have impressions of the interviewee's nonverbal cues, five rated them positively and two negatively. Judges who felt the cues were positive noted gestures which indicated "openness"--spreading the arms out to each side

with palms up, for example, when demonstrating a point. These judges liked the animation and expressiveness shown by the interviewee. The two negative evaluations were based primarily on perceptions of the interviewee as somewhat nervous and self-conscious during some parts of the interview.

Question #6: DID YOU FEEL ANY OF THE INTERVIEWEE ANSWERS WERE REHEARSED OR "CANNED"?

Eight of 12 judges felt that the interviewee's responses were generally sincere and spontaneous. Many of these judges commented that they expected interviewees to "practice" before taking part in a college recruitment interview, and they felt strongly that this interviewee had done so. However, they emphasized that there was a considerable difference between trying to anticipate some areas of interviewer questioning and actually memorizing the responses prior to an interview.

Four judges voiced suspicions about the sincerity and candidness of some interviewee answers. One judge described responses as often "plastic" and "too good to be true." Another judge faulted the interviewee for trying to be good at everything--i.e., both a personnel generalist and someone able to handle technicalities and specifics. One judge felt that some of the responses were "automatic" or rehearsed, but also that they came from an unconscious level and resulted from a great deal of prior self-assessment by interviewee.

Question #7: WHAT, IF ANY, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WOULD YOU
LIKE TO HAVE GOTTEN FROM THE INTERVIEWEE?

Table 13 contains summarized responses of the 12 judges to this question.

Table 13

Additional Information Desired by Judges
(Interview #2)

Judge	Types of Information Desired	(N = 12)
1	More information about Y Corporation, looking for confirmation and consistency of information, attendance, interpersonal skills evaluation, etc.	
	More information about high school to determine maturity level.	
	Information about interests, hobbies, to get picture of "total individual."	
	Did interviewee work during college?	
2	Information about interpersonal skills in previous jobs, attendance record, salary increases (if applicable).	
	Would ask questions to test honesty.	
	Information about past successes and interviewee's degree of dependability and maturity.	
3	Information indicating how well interviewee knows himself, self-assessment type information--strengths and weaknesses.	
	Would ask same questions differently to test honesty.	
4	Where interviewee really stands on personnel--more interested in people or technical specialities?	
	More information about specific responsibilities at Y Corporation.	
	Why interviewee is anxious to move--i.e., are there relationship problems with his parents?	

(continued)

Table 13 (con.)

Judge	Types of Information Desired
4 (con)	Would he get bored with a "routine" job to begin with?
5	How interviewee reacts to stress. What interviewee likes least and likes best, interests, etc.
6	"Total person information" like whether he likes to work with other people, the underlying motivations that direct him, his self-concept, his assessment of his strengths and weaknesses. Information about interviewee's capacity to learn.
7	Coursework and grades. Information about interviewee's ability to write well and present information clearly in written form.
8	"Resume type information" in more detail.
9	"Total person information" like self-image, feelings, strengths, and weaknesses, ability to be creative. Information about analytical and problem-solving skills.
10	Does interviewee have a deficiency in working with numerical concepts? Specifically why did interviewee change majors?
11	Grades, coursework, and why certain courses were chosen. Level of quantitative skills Why interviewee changed majors? Exact choice of work and geographical preferences.
12	Information about problems he must have encountered.

As shown in Table 13, the most frequently mentioned area in which more information was desired by the judges was self-assessment and information that would reveal more of the interviewee as a "total person." Judges wanted information about how the interviewee spent his time (hobbies and interests) and what career-related and non-career-related things he liked to do the best and the least. Also, more information was desired about the interviewee's understanding of his strengths and weaknesses and his overall self-concept. It was generally felt that the aforementioned information, when integrated with other "facts" about what the interviewee has done in the past, can be helpful in producing a more complete and in-depth picture of the job applicant. Presumably, the individual's potential for compatibility within the hiring organization can be more effectively evaluated with the addition of self-assessment information and information that discloses how the interviewee views himself.

The second most frequently mentioned area in which more information was desired by judges was grades and coursework. As noted previously, resumes and transcripts were not provided to judges in this study and all evaluations were made solely on the interview content.

It is interesting to note that only one area--self-assessment--was mentioned by a number of judges as one in which considerably more information was needed. Beyond that area,

there were no clear trends or topic areas which judges felt had been poorly covered by the interviewer.

Summary

It is clear from judges' evaluations of the two interviewees that Interviewee #2 was considered to be a more desirable candidate. Overall ratings for the two interviewees--4.1 for Interviewee #1 and 5.8 for Interviewee #2--clearly illustrate this point, as well as comments from judges in responses to open-ended questions.

Judges viewing Interview #1 cited more weaknesses than strengths when evaluating the interviewee, and there generally was consensus among judges about such negative factors as the poor quality of his responses and his indecisiveness.

Judges viewing Interview #2, on the other hand, cited more strengths than weaknesses and often pointed out things about the interviewee that contributed to a favorable impression. Judges were in agreement about the interviewee's major strength--the ability to communicate well by expressing and organizing his thoughts clearly--and referred to how this strength generally contributed to positive evaluations in other areas as well.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: INTERVIEWER PORTION OF INTERVIEWS 1 AND 2

Interviewer Section--Interview #1

Question #1: WHAT OVERALL NUMERICAL RATING WOULD YOU GIVE
THE INTERVIEWER? (scale of 1 to 7 with 7 being high)

Table 14 contains overall ratings assigned to the interviewer by the 12 judges.

Table 14

Overall Interviewer Numerical Ratings

Judge	Rating	(N = 12)
Judge 1	3	
Judge 2	4	
Judge 3	4	
Judge 4	4	
Judge 5	3	
Judge 6	2	
Judge 7	3	
Judge 8	5	
Judge 9	3	
Judge 10	5	
Judge 11	3	
Judge 12	5	
Interviewer overall mean--3.7		
Interviewee overall mean--4.1		

In Interview #1, the overall mean for the interviewer was 3.7, while the interviewee had an overall mean of 4.1.

Question #2: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RATING?

Table 15 contains summarized responses of the 12 judges evaluating the skills of the interviewer.

Table 15

Summarized Evaluations of the Interviewer (Overall)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors	(N = 12)
1	-----	"Up-tight" body language, not enough self-assessment questions or information about X Corporation experience gotten, seemed uncomfortable.	
2	-----	Too many open-ended questions, needed more structure, more control, more direction.	
3	-----	Needed more "small talk" with the interviewee, should have oriented him and built rapport.	
4	-----	Didn't gain control of the interview till half way through.	
5	-----	No personality or warmth, "canned" delivery and questions, leading questions and statements, seemed uninterested in interviewee.	
6	-----	Poor introduction, lack of planning, disjointed questions and organization, poor transitions.	
7	-----	Poor introduction, no orientation, no rapport built, didn't control well, didn't facilitate self-disclosure by interviewee.	
8	Got information she wanted and controlled well.	Not too well organized, bounced around some in questioning.	

(continued)

Table 15 (con.)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
9	-----	Didn't represent her company well, used "canned" questions, no rapport or warmth, unenthusiastic, didn't orient interviewee.
10	-----	Poor introduction, no orientation, seemed "artificial and impersonal," didn't represent her company well.
11	-----	Used "canned" approach, inflexible questions, didn't sell her company well, didn't reinforce his responses well or encourage him.
12	Got the information she wanted, used open questions well, probed well, got both positive and negative information, allowed him to talk.	"Cold" as a person.

As shown in Table 15, comments and evaluations of the interviewer in Interview #1 were predominantly negative, as was the overall numerical rating (3.7).

Negative Factors

The most frequently cited criticism of the interviewer was failure to set a positive and supportive climate. To illustrate this point, judges cited what they perceived to be an inadequate introduction given by the interviewer, failure to orient the interviewee to the expectations of the interviewer or what was to follow in the interview, and an overall

lack of warmth and responsiveness in the interviewer's manner of interacting with the interviewee. Several judges commented upon what they described to be "nervous," "up-tight," and "uncomfortable" behavior and body language.

The second most frequently mentioned criticism was poor choice and formation of questions. Judges faulted the interviewer for asking too many leading questions, too many "canned" questions, and not enough "self-assessment" questions. Four judges described the interviewer's questions as often "inappropriate" and felt that she should have tailored the interview more effectively to the interviewee (i.e., not use so many open-ended questions in the beginning when he appeared to be unfocused and digressing).

Positive Factors

Two judges made both positive and negative comments about the interviewer in response to this question. These judges were impressed by the interviewer's ability to get the information that she wanted from the interviewee and her skill in probing.

Question #3: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED?

Table 16 contains numerical ratings and comments by judges in response to this question.

Table 16

Content and Organization of Interviewer Questions

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	3	Organization was terrible because of poor introduction, poor opening question, and failure to orient interviewee to topics and what was expected of him.	
2	3	Failed to cover some basic content areas.	
3	4	Lost control, especially in the beginning, because of poor organization.	
4	5	Questions and content were fairly well-organized; she just wasn't getting good responses.	
5	3	This was basically a weak area.	
6	2	Interview was disjointed, unplanned, no logical flow to questions, things asked out of sequence, and no good bridges between topics.	
7	4	Organization was very poor at first; improved slightly later.	
8	5	Interviewer seemed "experienced" and this was reflected in the way she organized the questions and topics.	
9	4	Not a strong area.	
10	4	Jumped around too much; didn't follow a logical sequence.	
11	5	One of the interviewer's stronger areas.	
12	5	Good choice and organization of questions; allowed him ample time to express himself so that he should have felt positive about the interview experience.	

This question asked judges to evaluate the interviewer's choice of questions and the sequence and topic areas into which they were organized. The mean for the interviewer for this question was 3.9.

Four judges gave the interviewer a 5 in this area and commented on her ability to get negative as well as positive information as reflective of good question formation. They felt she was proficient at getting the information she wanted, but disagreed somewhat with what she was going for in many questions. These judges liked the way topics and questions were organized, and suggested that often she wasn't getting well-organized responses.

The judges who gave ratings of 2 and 3 felt that the way the interviewer handled the early part of the interview showed a definite lack of organization and led to a loss of control in the first half. They felt that the interviewee was allowed to give rambling and overly long answers because the interviewer could not "get organized" initially. These judges pointed to what they defined as a "disjointed" line of questioning by the interviewer in the early part of the interview, resulting from a poor introduction and failure to outline the structure of topics to be covered to the interviewee.

Question #4: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON SKILL IN PROBING? (scale of 1 to 7)

Table 17 contains numerical ratings and summarized comments of judges evaluating the interviewer's skill in probing.

Table 17
Interviewer Skill in Probing

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	4	Should have probed more about X Corporation-- what he did, how he was trained, why he left? Should have probed contradictions, i.e., saying he was a "team player" but preferring solo sports (bicycling).	
2	3	Failed to probe about coursework, grades, accomplishments at X Corporation. Probed well about why he changed colleges.	
3	5	Showed considerable skill in probing.	
4	6	Good at probing and attempted it often but interviewee didn't comply with information.	
5	4	Average.	
6	3	Did attempt some probes but failed to go to the next step with "tell me more," etc.	
7	6	Probed well, but disagreed with the type of information that she was trying to get from interview.	
8	4	Probing was too direct and forceful; too many closed questions.	
9	3	Hardly probed at all and failed to use two- step and three-step probes.	
10	4	Average.	
11	4	Adequate at probing for the type of infor- mation she was looking for.	
12	6	Strongest area. Kept control through probing.	

This question called for judges to evaluate the interviewer's ability to use the technique of probing or asking a follow-up question in a certain topic area to gather additional information that is usually more specific and at a somewhat "deeper" level. Often, probing questions are asked to follow up an open-ended question and are geared to exploring one aspect of the interviewee's answer in depth. Theorists consider the ability to probe skillfully as one characteristic that separates "skilled" interviewers from "average" or "adequate" interviewers.

The mean score for the interviewer for this question was 4.3. Skill in probing and skill in listening (question 7) were the highest means for the interviewer in Interview #1.

As noted in Table 17, three judges assigned a 6 to the interviewer for skill in probing, and, overall, seven of 12 judges felt that the interviewer was "average" or "above average" in this area. These judges commented that the interviewer attempted to probe often and effectively, although the interviewee often failed to produce the desired information--even after the second and third probes. One judge particularly liked the way the interviewer used the controlling technique of saying "let's back up" when the interviewee started to leave a topic, and then followed this with specific probes where she hadn't gotten the information previously.

Some of the judges who gave a lower rating for skill in probing felt the interviewer didn't probe enough--especially in the areas of why the interviewee left X Corporation, coursework and grades, and specific accomplishments at X Corporation.

Question #5: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON ABILITY TO SET CLIMATE AND BUILD RAPPORT? (scale of 1 to 7)

Table 18 contains numerical ratings and summarized comments of judges concerning the interviewer's ability to set climate and build rapport in the interview.

Table 18

Ability to Set Climate and Build Rapport

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	3	Interviewer never set the climate. The interviewee set it and the interviewer "reacted."	
2	6	Her introduction and closing were very warm. The way she explained about when he would hear if they were interested in another interview was effective.	
3	4	Poor introduction prevented positive climate and rapport from ever developing.	
4	3	"Canned" questions and delivery precluded development of rapport; T.V. studio atmosphere affected climate.	
5	0	Good climate and rapport impossible because of interviewer's "cold" business-like manner. Poor eye contact a problem for the interviewer.	

(continued)

Table 18 (con.)

Judge	Rating	Comments
6	2	Her nervousness prevented good climate and rapport that would have relaxed the interviewee.
7	3	Poor introduction and lack of orientation prevented good climate and rapport.
8	5	Poor introduction didn't encourage two-way communication or development of rapport. Opening question that was too general made the interviewee feel uncomfortable and ruined the atmosphere.
9	1	Very poor attempts at climate and rapport building.
10	3	Interviewer's weakest area because the climate that was set was so cold.
11	5	Interviewer did average job in this area.
12	4	Below average cause of a tense opening and going too fast into the opening question. Lack of orientation prevented good rapport from being built in the beginning of the interview.

This question called for judges to evaluate the interviewer's ability to establish an atmosphere or climate in which the interviewee would feel comfortable and likely to disclose information needed to make a good hiring decision. Interviewers often use such techniques as engaging the interviewee in "small talk" at the beginning of the interview and projecting a friendly manner that conveys genuine interest, in order to create a positive climate. Orienting the interviewee to the purpose of the interview,

the role that he/she will be expected to take, and how the information disclosed will be used, is usually considered part of setting climate and building rapport in the interview. Therefore, the first few minutes of the interview are fundamental to the relationship that develops or does not develop between the participants.

The mean score for the interviewer in this question was 3.3, the lowest rating assigned to the interviewer in Interview #1. The majority of the judges felt that this was the interviewer's weakest area by far. The interviewer's failure to give a thorough introduction and failure to orient the interviewee to what was to follow in the interview were noted by all but one of the 12 judges. The general feeling was that these omissions precluded development of a comfortable atmosphere or good relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. These judges also described the interviewer's style as rather "cold" and impersonal and felt this prevented good rapport from developing in the interview. The judge who gave the interviewer a zero cited lack of warmth and spontaneity as well as a "canned" or stilted delivery as preventing a favorable climate from developing.

One judge, however, gave the interviewer a 6 in this skill and cited the introduction and closing as the reasons for the evaluation. This judge especially liked the way the interviewer assured the interviewee in the closing that

he would hear something from her organization--one way or another--within ten days.

Question #6: DID THE INTERVIEWER BELIEVE THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO HER BY THE INTERVIEWEE?

Table 19 contains summarized responses by judges to this question.

Table 19

Did Interviewer Believe Information?

Judge	Comments	(N = 12)
1	Hard to tell, but probably "yes." His personal bias is that interviewees do embellish accomplishments.	
2	Yes, the interviewer style relaxed him and took the pressure off so that he would be "conversational" and straight-forward.	
3	Yes, but she wasn't getting the type of information she needed to make a hiring decision.	
4	Yes, because the information was so general.	
5	Yes, even though he didn't really tell her anything.	
6	She didn't use summaries so it was impossible to tell; also, she didn't "react."	
7	Yes, but very hard to tell because her concentration was often broken and her eye contact was very poor.	
8	Yes, probably.	
9	Yes, because she didn't care enough to question the information.	
10	No. Tried to trip him up often. Tried to get contradictory information.	
11	Yes.	
12	No, because she didn't give "positive strokes" after he gave answers.	

This question asked judges to make an assumption about whether or not the interviewer believed what the interviewee was telling her and to identify reasons for this assumption. It should be noted that of all the questions in the interview guide, this was the one judges hesitated to answer. They commented that with this particular interviewer it was very hard to tell. When pressed to make an evaluation, they were willing to "guess."

Nine of the 12 judges assumed that probably the interviewer did believe the information that she was getting. The variety of reasons given are noted in Table 19. The two judges who felt that she was not believing the interviewee were much more sure of their "guesses" than the judges who assumed that she did believe the information. One of these judges commented that he felt she had made up her mind early in the interview not to consider hiring the interviewee and then tried to get contradictory statements to reinforce this negative evaluation.

Question #7: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON LISTENING SKILLS?

Table 20 contains numerical ratings and summarized comments of judges in response to this question.

Table 20
Interviewer Listening Skills

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	3	Seemed very distracted, fidgeted with papers often, lacked attentiveness.	
2	5	Average. Could have re-asked questions that weren't answered.	
3	6	Strong area, good use of summaries and mirror statements. Excellent job of building questions based on previous answers.	
4	4	Not good because good listeners engage in "casual interchanges" based on some aspect of information given.	
5	4	Wasn't listening. Would have asked different questions.	
6	2	Failed to demonstrate active listening by making "closed loops."	
7	4	Failed to pick up on interviewee's inability to understand the questions. Should have adapted the interview to him much better.	
8	5	Was paying attention. Asked questions in a different way when he didn't answer it the first time.	
9	5	Questions reflected good listening skills.	
10	3	Only listened well enough to "play word games."	
11	5	Good listening demonstrated by attentiveness and good eye contact most of the time.	
12	6	Very good listening skills.	

This question asked judges to evaluate the interviewer's ability to listen effectively. Effective interviewer listening involves not only ability to receive information with as little "filtering" as possible, but also the ability to process that information and restructure and modify questions based on the information from interviewee responses.

The mean for this question was 4.3. Half the judges felt that the interviewer's listening was average or above--evidenced by her eye contact, use of summaries and transitions, and the way her questions reflected information that had been offered through previous interviewee responses.

Judges who gave low ratings noted nonverbal cues which they felt demonstrated a lack of interviewer attentiveness such as shuffling papers in her lap, poor eye contact, and general "nervousness." Also mentioned was what was termed the failure to modify or tailor the interview to the interviewee when it became apparent that he was having trouble with her questions.

Question #8: WHAT ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWER TECHNIQUES MIGHT
HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN THIS PARTICULAR INTERVIEW?

Table 21 contains summarized statements by judges in response to this question.

Table 21

Additional Interviewer Techniques Suggested by Judges

Judge	Techniques Suggested	(N = 12)
1	<p>Change introduction to tell more about self and the organization.</p> <p>Use a more structured approach from the beginning so that answers come back in a more organized fashion.</p> <p>Use many more self-assessment questions.</p>	
2	<p>Ask for the interviewee's impressions of the hiring organization.</p> <p>Oriented better to the purposes of the interview.</p> <p>Probed to find "task orientation" (extra-curricular activities, community involvement tell this, etc.)</p> <p>Would have asked salary and benefits expectations.</p> <p>Would have "sold" his organization better.</p>	
3	<p>Would have set a casual climate from the beginning with "small talk."</p> <p>Used more broad thought questions and self-assessment questions.</p> <p>Used many positive reinforcement statements such as "sounds interesting, tell me more."</p>	
4	<p>More self-assessment questions (i.e., greatest strengths and weaknesses).</p> <p>Changed introduction to a more relaxed conversational approach using subjects like sports that might be of interest to the interviewee.</p> <p>More probing into family background and relationships.</p> <p>More probing about why interviewee made the frequent changes in his life.</p>	

(continued)

Table 21 (con.)

Judge	Techniques Suggested
5	<p>Given more information about the organization.</p> <p>Allowed more opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions.</p> <p>Used more reinforcing positive comments to interviewee responses such as "sounds interesting...", etc.</p> <p>Probed to find out how well interviewee handles stress by asking questions about supervisory responsibilities in the past.</p>
6	<p>Used more internal summaries.</p> <p>Given more informal feedback and responsive statements to motivate the interviewee.</p>
7	<p>Better introduction that would have laid the groundwork for the interview.</p> <p>Improved climate with "small talk."</p> <p>Would have altered and tailored the interview to the interviewee by asking fewer open-ended questions.</p> <p>Concentrated more on present activities.</p>
8	<p>Better introduction.</p> <p>Not so broad an opening question and would have led up to it for a longer time.</p> <p>Used more tact in probing.</p> <p>Allowed interviewee more questions.</p> <p>Given more information about the organization.</p> <p>Used fewer leading questions and leading statements.</p>
9	<p>Used many more self-assessment and self-concept questions.</p> <p>Probed into family background and relationships.</p>

(continued)

Table 21 (con.)

Judge	Techniques Suggested
9 (con.)	Probed into wife's career and potential conflicts. Probed to find his potential for creativity.
10	Given a good orientation. Would have used "small talk" to relax the interviewee. Would have tried to show genuine interest in the interviewee. Would have planned better and tied questions and topic areas together better. Would have told more about the organization.
11	Given better introduction. Given an orientation and then used a less general opening question. More of a "casual conversation" style in interviewing. More self-assessment and questions identifying attitudes and values. Used better bridges and transitions between topic areas.
12	Would have built much better rapport through "positive stroking" and reinforcing interviewee responses. Better introduction and different opening question.

This question asked judges to evaluate and identify their own attitudes about selection interviewing, and then to describe techniques that they personally felt would be helpful in achieving interview goals and objectives. Content analysis of responses indicated that there were three overall areas in which judges would have employed different

techniques if they had been conducting the interview.

A majority of judges commented that they would have used different questions if they had been the interviewer. Five judges specified the importance of self-assessment questions in the interview as a means for pinpointing interviewee attitudes, values, and priorities. Two judges would have used a different opening question. They felt that, "Tell me a little about yourself," was too broad to be asked so early in the interview, and also that the groundwork had not been laid for such a question. Several judges would not have asked so many open-ended questions and would have tailored the questions more to the interviewee. And, many judges would have probed considerably more in the areas noted in Table 21.

The second area in which judges would have employed different techniques was that of setting climate and building rapport. Five judges mentioned that they would have used "small talk" in the beginning of the interview as a means of relaxing the interviewee and creating a less formal atmosphere. Also mentioned were the techniques of giving feedback and positive reinforcement to the interviewee in order to be supportive and encourage free responses (i.e., "sounds interesting, tell me more" and "I see, what else...?"). One judge suggested that he would try to diminish the status differential between himself and the interviewee in order to establish a more favorable climate.

The third area frequently mentioned by judges was the Introduction and Orientation. Eight of 12 judges suggested they would have used an entirely different approach to giving the introduction. Generally, they would have thoroughly introduced themselves and then given some background information about the company. They also would have engaged the interviewee in casual conversation about something that he might have been interested in right in the beginning. The judges stressed the technique of orienting the interviewee to what was to follow as essential to setting good climate, relaxing the interviewee, and improving the likelihood of receiving well-organized responses.

Other frequently noted techniques were "selling the organization more effectively by giving more information about it and allowing the interviewee the opportunity to ask more questions.

Question #9: WAS THIS INTERVIEW FAIRLY TYPICAL OF OTHER COLLEGE RECRUITMENT INTERVIEWS?

Table 22 contains summarized comments of judges in response to this question.

Table 22

Was This Interview Typical of Other
College Recruitment Interviews?

Judge	Comments	(N = 12)
1	Fairly typical, but they're usually a little more structured and stay more "general."	
2	Typical, since most interviewers and interviewees are relaxed like they were in this interview.	
3	Very typical, limited time forces errors and poor quality.	
4	Typical, because interviewees are often lacking in direction like this interviewee was.	
5	Typical, because most interviewers don't know how to interview.	
6	Typical.	
7	Typical, because of pressure caused by time constraints, the occurrence of breaks in interviewer's train of thought, and the necessity of deviating from a planned agenda.	
8	Better than most because the interviewer did succeed in getting the relevant data she wanted.	
9	Typical, unfortunately, because of poor quality of most college recruitment interviews.	
10	Not typical because the interviewee is below standard for the graduate level--lacking in direction.	
11	Typical.	
12	Typical, especially in time constraints and what they do to the quality of an interview.	

This question asked judges to evaluate the taped interview in relation to other college recruitment interviews

that they had knowledge of and interviews they had conducted, and also to make some comments about the general status of college recruitment interviewing today.

As shown in Table 22, nine judges felt that this interview was generally typical of others. However, the rationale used to support this conclusion varied greatly among the judges. Interestingly, the majority of judges considered it to be typical for essentially negative reasons. Concern over the effects of time constraints and other pressures under which college recruitment interviews must be carried out appears to be a significant issue reflected in judges' responses to this question. One judge felt that the quality of the taped interview was actually better than most college recruitment interviews because a considerable amount of relevant data was accumulated by the interviewer, as opposed to what he considered to be the more typical college interview in which little useful data is elicited.

Interviewer Section--Interview #2

Question #1: WHAT OVERALL NUMERICAL RATING WOULD YOU GIVE
THE INTERVIEWER? (scale of 1 to 7 with 7
being high)

Table 23 contains overall numerical ratings assigned to the interviewer by the 12 judges.

Table 23
Overall Numerical Ratings:
Interview #2

Judge	Rating	(N = 12)
Judge 1	6	
Judge 2	5	
Judge 3	6	
Judge 4	6	
Judge 5	3	
Judge 6	6	
Judge 7	6	
Judge 8	6	
Judge 9	6	
Judge 10	3	
Judge 11	3	
Judge 12	6	

The overall mean for the interviewer in Interview #2 was 5.2, while the interviewee had an overall mean of 5.8.

Question #2: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RATING?

Table 24 contains summarized responses of the 12 judges evaluating the skills of the interviewer.

Table 24
Summarized Evaluations of the Interviewer (Overall)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors (N = 12)
1	Built good rapport, used clarification well, paraphrased well, logical and coherent questions, good probing.	-----

(continued)

Table 24 (con.)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
2	Showed real knowledge of personnel, seemed intelligent.	Questions sometimes too complex.
3	Well-informed, good sequencing of questions, showed patience with interviewee.	Weak introduction, assumed that interviewee should know more than he really needed to know about personnel.
4	Asked most important questions first, showed quick thinking, good transitions, asked for elaboration well, poised, stayed in control of the interview.	Not "warm" enough, dwelled too long on Y Corporation experiences.
5	-----	Failed to introduce herself well, failed to orient the interviewee, failed to set climate.
6	-----	Too structured and "canned" style, too "cold" a manner, not enough attention to motives and feelings, too many specific questions.
7	Covered topics well, accomplished her goals, kept on track.	-----
8	Knew what information she wanted, informed, motivated interviewee to talk, good appearance, good questions.	-----
9	Thorough, prepared, let him talk enough, asked good open-ended questions.	Sometimes too reserved and "prim." Also somewhat unanimated.

(continued)

Table 24 (con.)

Judge	Positive Factors	Negative Factors
10	Well-organized and prepared, targeted questions well, listened well, tailored the interview to interviewee, good sequencing and transitions.	-----
11	-----	Talked too much, used too many closed questions, probing was too non-threatening.
12	Covered content well, clear phrasing, well-designed questions which let him talk.	Not enough warmth.

As indicated in Table 24, judges' comments about the interviewer in Interview #2 contained both positive and negative evaluations, with more comments falling in the positive category.

Positive Factors

Seven of nine judges making positive comments referred in some way to the interviewer's questions as a main strength. Questions were described as being "well designed," "coherent," and organized in a logical and effective sequence. Judges stressed the fact that the interviewer apparently knew exactly what she wanted to get (kinds of information) and was able to do so through skillful questioning and

tailoring the interview to the interviewee.

There was not consensus among judges on other positive factors, and a variety of skills and behaviors were mentioned as contributing to a positive evaluation of the interviewer.

Negative Factors

Five of eight judges making negative comments referred to a lack of warmth and animation. These judges described the interviewer's style and manner of interacting with the interviewee as "reserved" and somewhat "prim." Judges commented that this style plus failure to give an adequate orientation or introduction precluded the building of good rapport in the interview.

Several judges mentioned the use of too many specific and closed questions as contributing to a negative evaluation of the interviewer.

Question #3: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED?

Table 25 contains numerical ratings and comments by judges in response to this question.

Table 25

Content and Organization of Interviewer Questions--
Interview #2

Judge	Rating	Comments
1	4	A weak area, interviewer neglected last two years and high school activities. She did too much of the talking.
2	6	Good pattern to topics and questions.
3	6	Good pattern.
4	7	Excellent organization and question content.
5	6	Questions were sometimes too specific but interviewer did have them systematically organized.
6	5	Good, logical sequence of topics and questions.
7	5	Beginning lacked organization somewhat but improved considerably. Good organization considering the time constraints.
8	5	Overall managed the organization pretty well but should have lengthened the introduction (allowing more time for dialogue) and sometimes moved to next topic too rapidly.
9	6	Good, she got the information she wanted.
10	2	Haphazard organization of questions--not well-organized.
11	1	Disorganized format, talked too much, too many closed and unclear questions.
12	6	Tailored content and structure of the interview very well to interviewee

This question asked judges to evaluate the interviewer's choice of questions and the sequence and topic areas into

which they were organized. The mean for the interviewer for this question was 4.9.

Nine of 12 judges evaluated the organization and content of the interviewer's questions in a range from "good" to "excellent." These judges described the pattern of questions introduced by the interviewer as "systematic" and flowing in a logical sequence. As discussed in the previous question, it was felt that the interview structure was effectively tailored to the interviewee and that the interviewer succeeded in getting the kind of information she wanted from him because of the organization and content of questions. The judge who gave the interviewer a 7 cited her skill in making transitions between topic areas and her ability to stay in control through the way she organized the interview questions.

Three judges had largely negative evaluations. These judges described the organization and content of the questions as "haphazard," pointed to the interviewer's failure to give a proper introduction and orientation, and suggested that the interviewer moved to the next topic area too rapidly (i.e., sometimes interrupting the interviewee before he had completed his answer). The judge who gave a 1 to the interviewer in this area felt that her questions were of very poor quality--often redundant or unclear.

Question #4: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON SKILL
IN PROBING? (scale of 1 to 7)

Table 26 contains numerical ratings and summarized comments of judges evaluating the interviewer's skill in probing.

Table 26

Interviewer Skill in Probing--Interview #2

Judge	Rating	Comments
1	5	Followed up well in areas initiated with probes; alternated well between open and closed questions.
2	6	Interviewer used intelligent probing techniques.
3	7	Excellent area. Found out a lot of information in a limited time.
4	5	Good probing but may have probed a little too much about Y Corporation.
5	3	Poor. Needed more probing about Y Corporation, areas of school work, how interviewee would handle personnel problems, and more theoretical questions.
6	6	Knew what she wanted and kept probing till she got the information.
7	7	Asked very good probes.
8	7	Probed exceptionally well. Skillful at having interviewee compare and contrast different responses that he made.
9	5	Interviewee was so "open" that it was hard to evaluate the skill of the interviewer.
10	3	Didn't ask the right questions. Should have probed more about coursework and on-the-job training at Y Corporation.

(continued)

Table 26 (con.)

Judge	Rating	Comments
11	2	Poor because interviewer didn't build on previous information through probing. Should have probed more with "feeling" questions.
12	6	Probed well by first letting interviewee talk and then asking him to elaborate.

The mean score for the interviewer for this question was 5.2, the highest mean score for the interviewer in Interview #2. Eight of the 12 judges considered the interviewer's skill in probing to range from "good" to "excellent." The three judges who described the probing as "exceptionally good" were impressed with the interviewer's ability to expose many facets of the interviewee's personality through questions. They cited her ability to get the information she wanted in a variety of topic areas. Some judges did qualify their evaluations somewhat by pointing to the interviewee's obvious willingness to be "open" and the fact that this made the interviewer's probing skill "look better." The problem of trying to determine the extent to which a "cooperative and articulate" interviewee affects perceptions of the skills of the interviewer is an interesting issue. It was raised by judges in response to another question in Interview #2, and is further discussed in Chapter VII.

Judges who gave lower ratings to the interviewer for skill in probing faulted her for not probing more thoroughly in specific areas (high school, for example) and suggested that she should have used more probes to get at interviewee feelings and attitudes.

Question #5: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON ABILITY TO SET CLIMATE AND BUILD RAPPORT? (scale of 1 to 7)

(See this section of Interview #1 for preliminary comments about this question.)

Table 27 contains numerical ratings and summarized comments of judges concerning the interviewer's ability to set climate and build rapport in the interview.

Table 27

Ability to Set Climate and Build Rapport--
Interview #2

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	5	Interviewer made a moderate effort in this area, which is about what would be expected in a college recruitment interview.	
2	4	The weak introduction and lack of "small talk" with the interviewee were detrimental to the development of good climate.	
3	5	Weak introduction caused many problems here. The "studio environment" also probably had some deleterious effects on climate and rapport.	
4	4	The interviewer's "regimented" style prevented good rapport.	

(continued)

Table 27 (con.)

Judge	Rating	Comments
5	3	Poor introduction and lack of orientation were very detrimental. The interviewer could not have handled an introverted person well.
6	4	This was a weak area for the interviewer--she could have done better.
7	4	The introduction was so weak that it ruined any chance for rapport even though her closing was rather strong.
8	5	Interviewer efforts in setting climate were adequate. She did try to de-emphasize the role differences enough to relax him somewhat.
9	5	Interviewee's relaxed attitude got the interviewer "off the hook" in this area. What would she have done with an "up-tight" person?
10	2	Failed to set the climate well by poor introduction and lack of orientation.
11	7	Excellent setting the climate; didn't cause interviewee defensiveness.
12	5	Interviewer could have been warmer and friendlier; she was too "up-tight."

The mean score for the interviewer for this question was 4.4, the lowest mean for the interviewer in Interview #2. A poor introduction and an overall lack of warmth were cited by many judges as inhibiting to the development of good climate and rapport.

Among the judges who described the efforts of the interviewer to build climate and rapport as "adequate" or moderately effective, there was the feeling that the interviewer may have "lucked out" because the interviewee seemed so naturally out-going and articulate. They alluded to the fact that it was difficult to evaluate the interviewer's skill at setting the climate because of the interviewee's basic personality style--relaxed and conversant.

The two judges who gave the lowest ratings (2 and 3) based their evaluations primarily upon what they felt was an extremely poor introduction and failure to orient the interviewee to what was to follow in the interview. The judge who gave the interviewer a 7 for climate and rapport cited the interviewee's lack of defensiveness throughout the interview as illustrative of interviewer skill in establishing a favorable climate and building rapport.

Question #6: DID THE INTERVIEWER BELIEVE THE INFORMATION
GIVEN BY THE INTERVIEWEE?

Table 28 contains summarized responses by judges to this question.

Table 28

Did Interviewer Believe Information?--
Interview #2

Judge	Comments	(N = 12)
1	There were no indications that she didn't believe him, so assume that she did.	
2	Interviewer was suspicious of him when he kept repeating "no problem."	
3	Interviewer probably believed him but she did ask for clarification quite often.	
4	She was suspicious of some answers because they were just too good to be believed...no one can be that good at everything!	
5	Very hard to tell, no clues or real indications from interviewer.	
6	No clear feeling about this since the interviewer often gave mixed or contradictory reactions.	
7	Saw nothing to indicate that the interviewer didn't believe him.	
8	Yes, interviewer did believe his information.	
9	Interviewer probed for verification and then did seem to believe him, although she may have been suspicious of high school information.	
10	Very hard to tell because she was so unanimated.	
11	Interviewer probably did believe the information.	
12	Yes, since interviewee wasn't contradicting himself.	

Although most judges felt that it was very hard to evaluate whether or not the interviewer believed the information she was getting, five judges "assumed" that she

did believe it since the interviewee was apparently not contradicting himself in their opinion. Five other judges felt that they could not make an assumption--primarily because the interviewer did not show much reaction to any of the responses she was getting. Two judges had definite feelings that the interviewer did not believe some of the information. One of these mentioned that the interviewee answers were "too perfect" and that naturally the interviewer would be somewhat suspicious and doubtful about them. The other judge commented that the interviewee's insistence that there were "no problems" would certainly cause the interviewer to be uncertain about the truthfulness of some responses. Judges who felt the interviewer did not believe all the information were much more sure of their assumptions than the judges who assumed that she did believe the information.

Question #7: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE INTERVIEWER ON
LISTENING SKILLS? (scale of 1 to 7)

(See this section of Interview #1 for preliminary information pertaining to this question.)

Table 29 contains numerical ratings and summarized responses of judges to this question.

Table 29
Interviewer Listening Skills--
Interview #2

Judge	Rating	Comments	(N = 12)
1	5	Interviewer consistently demonstrated active listening by following up topic areas with probes and building on previous information.	
2	6	Listened very well; occasionally rushed into next question too fast.	
3	5	Listened well but sometimes seemed a little too concerned with the next question.	
4	5	Once in awhile she seemed to be missing some of the interviewee's answers because she was planning the next question.	
5	3	Listened at the "surface" level satisfactorily but did not do "interactive listening."	
6	6	Effective.	
7	5	Indicated that she was listening by often re-phrasing questions.	
8	6	Good listening skills because she was able to create and modify questions during the interview.	
9	6	Demonstrated active listening by nodding her head and reinforcing the interviewee's responses often.	
10	3	Interviewer seemed "unaccomplished" by the fact that she did not take notes on important things and thus show she was listening.	
11	5	Sometimes interviewer repeated some of the questions she asked. Hard to tell whether it was because she wasn't listening to the answer the first time or because she was checking for validity.	
12	6	Effective.	

The mean for the interviewer for this question was 5.0. Ten of 12 judges gave the interviewer either a 5 or a 6 for listening skills and mentioned a variety of reasons for making this evaluation, as noted in Table 29. Several of these judges pointed to the fact that the interviewer occasionally seemed to be formulating the next question while the interviewee was giving a response, but they generally felt that her skills as an active listener were above average. Several judges noted the interviewer's skill in creating questions spontaneously as the interview progressed as being indicative of a good listener and skilled interviewer.

The two judges who gave 3's to the interviewer for listening skills noted that she did not take notes on seemingly important things and that her listening seemed to be only perfunctory, or on the surface level, rather than "interactive."

Question #8: WHAT ADDITIONAL INTERVIEWER TECHNIQUES MIGHT
HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN THIS PARTICULAR INTERVIEW?

Table 30 contains summarized statements by judges in response to this question.

Table 30

Additional Interviewer Techniques
Suggested by Judges--
Interview #2

Judge	Techniques Suggested	(N = 12)
1	<p>Would have created a more casual atmosphere through "small talk."</p> <p>Use less of a "question and answer" format and more of a conversational one; a much less structured approach.</p>	
2	<p>Use a table between interviewer and interviewee so that either one's personal space was not violated.</p> <p>Would have done a more thorough introduction and created better rapport through it from the start.</p> <p>Would have slowed the pace of questioning.</p> <p>Would have probed until interviewee disclosed a problem somewhere in his background.</p> <p>Would have given more information about the hiring organization.</p> <p>Would have asked interviewee if he would re-locate.</p>	
3	<p>Would have used an introduction in which interviewer told more about herself/himself.</p> <p>Would have oriented interviewee to the goals and procedures of the interview.</p> <p>Would have given more information about the organization.</p>	
4	<p>Would have used less structured approach and set a more relaxed tone through use of "small talk" (asking about favorite classes, for example).</p> <p>Would have let interviewee talk more in order to assess his communication skills and thought processes.</p>	

(continued)

Table 30 (con.)

Judge	Techniques Suggested
5	<p>Would have given more information about the company and opportunities for advancement.</p> <p>More informal and less structured approach-- interviewer appeared too "efficient" and cold.</p> <p>Would have used more "small talk" and techniques to relax the interviewee.</p>
6	<p>Would have given more information about the company and opportunities.</p>
7	<p>Let interviewee talk more and ask more questions.</p> <p>Would have "sold" the organization better by telling advantages, etc.</p>
8	<p>Used more open-ended questions.</p> <p>Try to allow more questions about the organization and try to determine the extent of the interviewee's knowledge about the organization.</p> <p>Would try to determine interviewee's sense of commitment to the goals of the organization.</p> <p>Would ask more theoretical questions to assess thought processes.</p>
9	<p>More probing into family relationships and background to determine potential for compatibility.</p> <p>Would have used more questions to find out about level of motivation for work.</p>
10	<p>Better introduction and an adequate orientation.</p> <p>More information given about the company.</p> <p>Set better climate with use of "small talk."</p> <p>Ask where interviewee wants to be in five years, to determine career commitment and motivation level.</p>

(continued)

Table 30 (con.)

Judge	Techniques Suggested
11	<p>Would have used introduction to tell purpose of "interview" and establish sequence of topics to be covered.</p> <p>Would have allowed interviewee more time for questions at end.</p> <p>Probed grades and coursework.</p> <p>Probed self-concept.</p>
12	<p>More informal and relaxed style.</p> <p>Would have asked more "feeling" and self-assessment questions.</p>

Content analysis of responses to this question indicated that there were three areas in which judges would have used different techniques if they had been conducting the interview.

Six judges suggested that they would have used a less formal, less structured approach in the interview. They commented on the need to relax the interviewee through the use of "small talk" and stressed their preference for a more "conversational" and "casual" tone and manner of interacting with the interviewee.

Half the judges also said they would have given much more information about their organization if they had been conducting the interview. Judges talked about the importance of "selling the organization" through disclosing information about opportunities for advancement, the advantages of working

for their corporation, and the goals and values of the organization.

A third frequently mentioned area was that of giving a better and more thorough introduction and orientation to the interviewee. Again, the importance of the introduction and orientation to rapport building and climate setting were stressed by judges.

Question #9: WAS THIS INTERVIEW TYPICAL OF OTHER COLLEGE RECRUITMENT INTERVIEWS?

Table 31 contains summarized responses of judges to this question.

Table 31

Judges' Evaluations of Whether or Not
The Interview was Typical

Judge	Comments	(N = 12)
1	Fairly typical. Usually, more information about company is disclosed, more stress on utilizing the time effectively--hoping unqualified will screen themselves out!	
2	-----	
3	Better than most. Interviewer actually seemed interested in interviewee. Interviewee was above average.	
4	Typical.	
5	Probably typical. Interviewer seemed "automatic" in style and this is the norm in college interviews.	
6	Above average. Interviewee communicated better than most college interviewees.	

(continued)

Table 31 (con.)

Judge	Comments
7	Not typical. The quality of both participants was much higher than usual.
8	Typical in terms of process and content...maybe more information gotten than is usual.
9	Not typical because interviewee was so open and relaxed.
10	Typical. However, it's very hard to generalize--they're all so different.
11	Typical, yes. Poor quality is the general rule!
12	Fairly typical.

As noted above, seven judges chose to describe the interview as "typical" or "fairly typical." Of those who would elaborate on their evaluations, content and process variables were noted as being generally similar to other college recruitment interviews with which they were familiar. One judge, however, described it as being typical for a negative reason--the fact that poor quality is the general rule in college interviewing.

Four judged the interview to be "not typical" because one or both of the participants was above average. Judges cited the interviewee's communication skills and "openness" and the interviewer's overall ability and apparent interest in the interviewee as illustrative of their evaluations.

Summary

In summarizing judges' evaluations of the interviewer's skills and behavior in Interview #1 and #2, some interesting themes emerge. First, Table 32 (page 155) contrasts numerical ratings assigned to the interviewer for each interview in the specific areas of organization and content of questions, skill in probing, ability to set climate and build rapport, and listening skills--as well as for the overall rating.

As indicated in Table 32, numerical ratings varied considerably between the two interviews and the interviewer was judged more effective in Interview #2 in all categories. Certain similarities can be noted in comparing judges' evaluations, however. For example, the specific skills receiving the highest and lowest ratings were the same for both interviews. Skill in probing (as well as listening skills in Interview #1) was rated highest, while ability to set climate was rated lowest in both interviews.

Moreover, comments from the two sets of judges evaluating the interviewer and elaborating on reasons for choosing specific numerical ratings were often similar. Both sets of judges talked about the interviewer's style as being formal, structured, and somewhat lacking in warmth and responsiveness. And, failure to give an adequate introduction and orientation to the interviewee were cited by the majority of judges in both groups as a primary interviewer weakness.

Table 32

A Comparison of Numerical Ratings for Interviewer in Interview #1 and #2

Interview #1									Interview #2								
Judge	Overall Interview Rating	Overall Interview Rating	Interviewer's Organization and Content of Questions	Interviewer's Skill in Probing	Interviewer's Climate Setting	Did Interviewer Believe Information?	Interviewer's Listening Skills	Was Interview Typical?	Judge	Overall Interview Rating	Overall Interview Rating	Interviewer's Organization and Content of Questions	Interviewer's Skill in Probing	Interviewer's Climate Setting	Did Interviewer Believe Information?	Interviewer's Listening Skills	Was Interview Typical?
H.M.	4	3	3	4	3	Yes	3	Fairly	E.C.	5	6	4	5	5	Yes	5	Fairly
R.V.	4	4	3	3	6	Yes	5	Yes	J.F.	6	5	6	6	4	?	6	---
D.S.	3	4	4	5	4	Yes	6	Yes	M.B.	6	6	6	7	5	Yes	5	Better
J.R.	3	4	5	6	3	Yes	4	Fairly	M.F.	5	6	7	5	4	?	5	Yes
J.B.	3	3	3	4	0	Yes	4	Yes	D.C.	6	3	6	3	3	?	3	Yes
H.N.	3	2	2	3	2	?	2	Yes	J.Z.	6	6	5	6	4	Yes	6	Better
D.R.	4	3	4	6	3	Yes	4	Yes	B.S.	6	6	5	7	4	Yes	5	Better
M.M.	4	5	5	4	5	Yes	5	Better	J.S.	6	6	5	7	5	?	6	Better
J.L.	6	3	4	3	1	Yes	5	Yes	E.W.	6	6	6	5	5	?	6	Better
D.D.	5	5	4	4	3	No	3	Below	B.R.	7	3	2	3	2	?	3	Yes
A.T.	5	3	5	4	5	Yes	5	Yes	J.D.	5	3	1	2	7	Yes	5	Yes
B.M.	5	5	5	6	4	?	6	Yes	V.D.	5	6	6	6	5	Yes	6	Fairly
Means	4.1	3.7	3.9	4.3	3.3	---	4.3	---	Means	5.8	5.2	4.9	5.2	4.4	---	5.0	---

When asked what additional techniques might have increased the effectiveness of the interviews, judges from both groups suggested that the interviewer needed to build rapport through the use of small talk and a less formal approach to the interviewee, ask more self-assessment questions to elicit feelings and attitudes, and generally to "sell the organization" by giving more information about it to the interviewee.

It can be noted, then, that although personality styles of interviewee 1 and 2 varied significantly as did perceptions of interviewer effectiveness, interviewer techniques and style generally remained constant.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was undertaken to survey current practices in selection interviewing and to investigate the dynamics of the decision-making process as it occurs in the selection interview. The college recruitment interview was the specific focus.

In Chapter II, some of the challenges of conducting the college recruitment interview were outlined and discussed. It was pointed out that interviewers often encounter vast differences among interviewees in their degree of maturity and sophistication, their areas of specific interests, and their ability to communicate orally. In only 20 to 30 minutes the interviewer must cover a wide range of topics, and, thereby gather enough information to make a sound decision about the interviewee's potential value to the organization. The majority of interviewers participating in this study voiced feelings of frustration concerning these and other inherent problems encountered when conducting college interviews and attempting to meet the goals of the interview.

In order to accomplish the specific purposes of this research, a questionnaire was administered to personnel specialists and college recruiters, two college recruitment

interviews were videotaped for subsequent evaluation, and 24 interviews were conducted with personnel specialists and college recruiters who evaluated the taped interviews. The results of the questionnaire and interviews were tabulated and integrated in order to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

Conclusions and Analysis

I. IN THE INTERVIEW, THERE IS AN APPARENT INTERACTION EFFECT IN WHICH THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS ON EACH PARTICIPANT STRONGLY AFFECT BOTH THE QUALITY OF THE OTHER'S COMMUNICATION AND THE POSSIBILITY EACH INDIVIDUAL WILL BE PERCEIVED AS EFFECTIVE.

In this study, judges in the two groups differed widely in their perceptions of the desirability of the interviewee and their perceptions of interviewer's expertise and skill in conducting the interviews.

Numerical ratings and comments made by judges in the two groups evaluating the interviewees differed widely. Judges viewing Interviewee #1 assigned a 4.1 overall rating and concluded that responses were often "rambling," "disorganized," and "nonspecific." Judges generally agreed that the interviewee's major weakness was the poor quality of the content of his responses and his inability to present information in a well-organized manner.

Interviewee #2 was assigned an overall rating of 5.8 and was generally described as being a very good communicator. His responses were considered to be targeted to the interviewer's questions and presented in a clear and well-organized manner. The most frequently mentioned major strength was his "articulateness."

Likewise, judges in the two groups differed widely in their perceptions of the skills and expertise of the interviewer. Table 33 compares numerical ratings assigned to the interviewer in Interviews #1 and #2.

Table 33

A Comparison of Interviewer and Interviewee
Numerical Ratings for Interviews #1 and #2

Interview #1		Interview #2		Overall Means
Overall Interviewee	4.1	Overall Interviewee	5.8	5.0
Overall Interviewer	3.7	Overall Interviewer	5.2	4.5
Organization and Content of Interviewer's Questions	3.9	Organization and Content of Interviewer's Questions	4.9	4.4
Skill in Probing	4.3	Skill in Probing	5.2	4.8
Ability to Set Climate	3.3	Ability to Set Climate	4.4	3.9
Listening Skills	4.3	Listening Skills	5.0	4.7

As noted above, interviewer numerical ratings paralleled those of the interviewees--that is in Interview #1 where the interviewee was judged to be an ineffective communicator, interviewer ratings were lowest across the board. And,

conversely, in Interview #2 where the interviewee was perceived to be an effective communicator, the interviewer received higher ratings overall and in each skill area.

Evaluations of the interviewer's skills by judges viewing Interview #1 were overwhelmingly negative. The interviewer was generally described as lacking technical expertise in the areas of maintaining control of the interview, constructing and sequencing questions, making transitions, and building rapport. A consistent theme was that the interviewer failed to represent her company effectively.

Comments by judges viewing Interview #2 were proportionately more positive than negative concerning the skills of the interviewer; she was generally described as skilled in the areas of probing and asking for clarification, sequencing and organizing questions, and making transitions. It was felt that the interviewer was knowledgeable about the personnel function and that she covered the content effectively and thoroughly.

One judge proposed that the interviewer's communication skills were responsible for the poor showing made by the interviewee (a judge evaluating Interview #1). Another judge commented that the interviewee's ability to express himself effectively served to make the interviewer "look good," and then wondered how competent the interviewer would be judged to be if she had interviewed a less articulate candidate (judge evaluating Interview #2).

Thus, in the two interviews the communication skills of the interviewees differed greatly as did the communication style and perceived effectiveness of the interviewer. In interacting with the more favorable candidate her ratings went up, and with the less favorable one her ratings were lower. It appears that data from this study not only identifies the apparent operation of an interaction effect between interviewer and interviewee (illustrating the transactional nature of the communication process), but also suggests that the quality of interviewer communication in the interview and the perceived level of interviewer expertise are strongly affected by the communication skills and behaviors of the interviewee.

II. RECRUITERS ARE ABLE TO GIVE RATIONAL, WELL-DOCUMENTED REASONS FOR THEIR EVALUATIONS OF CANDIDATES.

Decision-making and the integration of information about the interviewee into a "decision policy" have been the focus of a number of previous studies.

Maier (1966) and Maier and Janzen (1967) suggested that interviewers often make decisions based on intuition and general impressions rather than logic, and that often they cannot identify specifically why they make decisions about certain variables.

Results from this research indicate that recruiters are able to evaluate interviewees and give rational, specific reasons for their evaluations. Judges in both groups were

able to identify and analyze how specific strengths and weaknesses affected their overall judgments and numerical ratings of the interviewees. And, interestingly, there was an absence of talk about "gut level reactions" entering into the decision-making process.

III. THERE IS CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THOSE INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTICS JUDGED AS FAVORABLE IN THEORY AND THOSE IDENTIFIED BY PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWERS AS REASONS FOR THEIR POSITIVE EVALUATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWEE--GENERAL PERSONALITY TRAITS ARE CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT THAN SPECIFIC ABILITY OR EXPERIENCE.

As noted in Chapter II, the literature contains many lists of interviewee characteristics and behaviors identified in studies and surveys as contributing to favorable ratings. Among those most frequently ranked near the top are 1) good oral communication skills, 2) a positive degree of self-confidence, and 3) a favorable appearance (clothes, posture, and demeanor).

Questionnaire results in this study indicated that respondents ranked the ability to communicate orally as the most important factor leading to a positive evaluation. It was rated number one on the list of 28 decision factors and was also the most frequently mentioned response to an open-ended question about how interviewers "size up" an interviewee's potential. Also considered important by question-

naire respondents were self-confidence, emotional stability, enthusiasm, and appearance.

Evaluation of decisions made about the interviewees in the videotaped interviews affirms the importance of oral communication ability, self-confidence and appearance since they were mentioned most frequently as interviewee strengths in both interviews. (Note: oral communication ability was defined differently by the two sets of judges--i.e., judges viewing Interviewee #2 specified depth of vocabulary and paralinguistics as the oral skills they felt were strengths.)

The impact of general personality traits or characteristics on interviewer decision-making is clear. Also, it would appear to be directly related to the most frequently stated objective of the selection interview by questionnaire respondents in this study--to find out what kind of person the interviewee is (or the assessment of the total individual).

IV. WHEN INTERVIEWER RATINGS (EVALUATIONS) OF INTERVIEWEES DIFFER, IT IS OFTEN BECAUSE THEY ATTEND TO THE SAME INFORMATION BUT WEIGHT IT DIFFERENTLY.

Examples from both interviews can be cited to illustrate the fact that interviewers were attending to many of the same specific facts disclosed by the interviewee and also the same personality characteristics, but evaluating or weighing them differently.

For example, although half the judges viewing Interview #1 reacted to the fact that the interviewee had left X Corporation and identified it as affecting their evaluation, there was no agreement about 1) whether this was a positive or negative factor, and 2) whether the interviewee had improved or hurt his image by his explanation of why he left. One judge felt that leaving X Corporation showed a desire to grow and an unwillingness to accept routine assignments--positive characteristics. Several other judges felt that it demonstrated a lack of commitment to career goals, indecisiveness, and a lack of maturity.

In Interview #2, judges evaluated the interviewee's confidence level differently. Some felt that the interviewee showed a positive and healthy degree of self-confidence, while others talked about him appearing over-confident and "cocky" during some parts of the interview.

Nonverbals were interpreted differently among judges in both interviews also. In Interview #1, for example, the same eye contact judged "good" by one judge was rated "very poor" by another. There was lack of consensus about gestures also. One judge described the interviewee's hand gestures as further reinforcement for concluding that the interviewee was "indecisive," while another described his gestures as showing "positiveness" and "decisiveness."

Results of this study appear to confirm one of Mayfield's

conclusions (cited in Chapter II) that when interviewers obtain the same information they are likely to interpret or weigh it differently.

V. INTERVIEWERS MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT INTERVIEWEES EARLY IN THE INTERVIEW AND ARE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR DECISIONS.

Analysis of both questionnaire data and interviews with judges disclosed the fact that interviewers feel that they can effectively size up the interviewee in the first half of the interview. Questionnaire respondents had a mean time of 13.5 minutes into the 30 minute interview, and many felt able to make a decision in the first ten minutes.

Analysis of questionnaire data indicates that interviewers are generally quite confident about their decisions (two-thirds said they were 80-100% confident of their decisions). Judges participating in the analysis of both interviews expressed a similar degree of confidence in their ability to make sound decisions about job applicants.

VI. THERE IS GREAT DIVERSITY AMONG INTERVIEWERS IN THE TECHNIQUES THEY VALUE, THE CONTENT THEY CHOOSE TO FOCUS UPON, AND THE WAY THEY MAKE DECISIONS.

Analysis and comparison of data from both interviews leads to some general assumptions about what may enhance the effectiveness of each participant in the interview process.

On the basis of this data, it is suggested that the interviewee should: 1) be articulate, organized in his responses, and enthusiastic, 2) able to analyze strengths and weaknesses comfortably, 3) "sell" himself/herself effectively but avoid "over-kill," 4) remember that everyone has had problems and that it is not realistic to avoid all mention of them, and 5) be aware that it is not necessarily specific experience that determines acceptance but rather what those experiences tell about the total person.

Interviewers, on the other hand, have the responsibility for drawing out data from the interviewee and if they are not successful in this function the potential of the interviewee cannot be adequately assessed. Data from this study suggests that it is important for interviewers to: 1) set a supportive climate through an adequate introduction, 2) give the interviewee a thorough orientation, 3) ask clear questions, 4) probe topics in depth (particularly in the areas of past experiences and self-assessment), 5) keep the interview organized and make smooth transitions between topic areas, and 6) reflect upon the total performance of the interview when making a decision.

Recommendations

Results obtained in this study offer ideas for further research in the following areas:

1. The extent to which good oral communication skills have a "halo" effect upon decision-making about other interviewee characteristics needs further investigation. Results from this research indicate that skill in oral communication was considered essential for positive ratings both from judges evaluating the videotaped interviews and from questionnaire respondents. Ability to communicate orally was the over-riding factor that accounted for the highly favorable evaluation of one interviewee, and the lack of ability to communicate well orally was a primary factor contributing to negative evaluations of the other interviewee. It seems important to investigate the extent to which both good and poor oral communication skills effect interviewer's judgments of other interviewee characteristics and behaviors.

2. Further investigation into how interviewee non-verbal behavior enters into the decision-making process is suggested. An interesting contrast between the two groups of judges in their evaluations of interviewee nonverbal cues was noted in this study. Although there was lack of agreement about whether or not certain aspects of Interviewee #1's nonverbal behavior were positive or negative, judges were able to recall and talk about nonverbal cues in detail. Judges evaluating Interviewee #2, on the other hand, were initially unable to recall anything significant--either positive or negative. The fact that Interviewee #1 was judged to be an ineffective communicator while Interviewee #2

was considered to be extremely articulate may have some important implications for understanding the circumstances under which nonverbal cues take on significance. It is the researcher's opinion that further investigation into the relationship of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of verbal content to how much attention is paid to nonverbal cues is warranted.

3. The interaction effect noted in the conclusions and the resulting assumption that the capacity of the interviewer to conduct an effective interview may often be determined by the level of communication skill of the interviewee has major implications for interviewer training. Current training programs focus upon teaching interviewers to ask the "right" questions, to focus content upon specific job criteria, and to keep within legal guidelines. It seems obvious that the potential effectiveness of these strategies and techniques can be greatly diminished by an inarticulate interviewee. Thus, it would seem that a fertile area for further research might be attempting to identify alternative approaches for conducting selection interviews with interviewees who have poor oral skills. This would seem especially relevant for dealing with interviewees in technical fields where oral communication skills are not necessarily requisite, yet background information must be elicited in the interview.

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